

MYTH, MEANING AND HERMENEUTIC: THE METHOD OF
CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS APPLIED TO NARRATIVE
IN MARK

by

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CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABBREVIATIONS	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. EXPLICATION OF LEVI-STRAUSS' METHOD	6
"The Structural Study of Myth"	6
Problems in the Field of Mythology	6
Contingency versus Predictability	7
The Substance of Myth	7
Method	10
The Oedipus myth	10
The Zuni myth	16
The formula	18
The mediator	24
Summary of the method	25
"Four Winnebago Myths"	26
Purpose	26
First Myth	26
Second Myth	30
Third Myth	31
Fourth Myth	31
Comparsion of Mythic Structures	37
Summary of Levi-Strauss' Method	38

	vii
3. CRITIQUE OF LEVI-STRAUSS' METHOD	41
"The Structural Study of Myth"	41
"Four Winnebago Myths"	51
4. APPLICATION OF LEVI-STRAUSS' METHOD	58
The Parable of the Sower	58
Text	58
Interpretation	59
The Woman with the Hemorrhage	65
Text	65
Interpretation	66
5. HERMENEUTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY	74
A Hermeneutical Proposal: The Transformation of Imagination	74
The Hermeneutical Proposal Applied	80
The Parable of the Sower	80
The Woman with the Hemorrhage	86
The Mythic Structures Superimposed	94
Conclusion	98
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	100

ABBREVIATIONS

- RAC Levi-Strauss, Claude. The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology: I. Translated by John and Doreen Weightman. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- SA _____. Structural Anthropology. Translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, 1963.
- SA II _____. Structural Anthropology, II. Translated by Monique Layton. New York: Basic Books, 1976.

ABSTRACT

The method of Claude Levi-Strauss is the subject of this project. His method of interpreting myth is first explained by analyzing his two articles, "The Structural Study of Myth" and "Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch." Then, having critiqued the two articles, his method is applied to two stories from Mark, the Parable of the Sower and the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage. Finally hermeneutical implications resulting from Levi-Strauss' method and thesis are spelled out.

Levi-Strauss' hypothesis is twofold. 1) As the mind imposes form on data, prompted by the unconscious mind, the conscious mind divides data into categories, levels and orders. 2) The mind then arranges the categories into binary oppositions, resolving the oppositions with mediating categories. If Levi-Strauss' hypothesis is correct, because this structure of the mind is unconscious, it will be manifest in any composition of the human mind, particularly myth, a corporate composition. Levi-Strauss therefore suggests that myth will consist of constituent units, organized into binary oppositions and resolutions. His method is intended to uncover the constituent units of myth and to reveal both the structure of the myth as the relationship between constituent units and the unconscious structure of the human mind.

Applied to the Parable of the Sower, Levi-Strauss' method reveals two binary oppositions, a fundamental opposition between the Sower and the Birds, Sun and Thorns, replaced and resolved by a

secondary opposition between the Seed that grows and the Seed that is taken. Each of these subjects have accompanying functions.

Applied to the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage, his method reveals a fundamental opposition between the Kingdom of God (a constituent unit not present in the overt content of the story) and the Woman with the Hemorrhage. This opposition is replaced by a secondary opposition between two types of healer, Jesus and the Physicians.

As Levi-Strauss logically suggests that in myth a binary opposition may be resolved in one of two ways, socially realistic and socially absurd, in the hermeneutical proposal, it is suggested that once the mythic structure of a Bible story is determined, it may be understood directly to challenge and transform the story's inverse mythic structure. Using Levi-Strauss' formula, this inverse structure can logically be determined. One interesting and important conclusion that follows from this method is the Jesus' healing of the Woman is not an act of unilateral power, rather, healing comes only at expense to the healer.

Finally, as Levi-Strauss defines myth as the sum total of its variants, the structures of the two stories are superimposed, thus coupling the Sower with the Kingdom of God, the Birds, Sun and Thorns with the Woman, the Seed taken with the Physicians and the Seed growing with Jesus. This structure becomes the context into which other stories from the same group may be cast and understood.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The problem addressed by this project is methodology in Biblical interpretation. The church is always and everywhere concerned with hermeneutic. For clergy and laity alike, to discover the Bible's meaning and message is of great importance.

The interpretation of Biblical narrative is particularly problematic. Stories are felt; their power is often a function of their merely being told. But unlike some genres of Biblical material, stories do not overtly predicate meaning; they create pensiveness and provoke imagination. This being the case, the question of method must always be at issue. How do we discover meaning in Biblical narrative? Assuming that stories in the Bible have a message to convey, what method can be employed that will enable the Biblical interpreter systematically and objectively to uncover that meaning?

Then, given the fact that Christianity is an "enculturating phenomenon" and that community is the primary molecule of the Christian religion,¹ how is the meaning discovered in a Biblical narrative translated into community, so that its rituals--including not only "special rites," but also the social "behavior patterns" resulting from rites²--become transformed by the Biblical text?

¹The understanding of community and ritual reflected here comes from conversations with Professor Burton Mack, and from his unpublished paper, "Ritual Killing and the Lord's Supper According to Paul," p. 1. Quotations are taken from his paper.

Initially, at least, imagination is the obvious locus of transformation, for having heard a story, imagination is the story's ongoing residence. How, then, can we understand the nature of the transformation of the imagination?

Although the French Structuralist Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss does not attend to Biblical narrative, his method of interpreting myth is concerned with discovering the meaning myth conveys--its message--and how myth functions in the mind of the listener.³ His method, successfully applied to the Bible, may yield surprisingly profound and satisfying results for the Christian community. This project undertakes to explicate Levi-Strauss' method of the interpretation of myth, and to assess the effectiveness of this method for the interpretation of Biblical narrative.

Levi-Strauss defines "meaning" as "the ability of any kind of data to be translated in a different language."⁴ By "language," Levi-Strauss refers to any mode of communication. So, when he suggests that meaning is what is translatable from one language into another, he does not merely mean something like French into English. As used by Levi-Strauss, French and English are both of the same "language" in that both are modes of communication that employ speaking as

²Ibid.

³Claude Levi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology: I (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 12.

⁴Claude Levi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning (New York: Schocken, 1979), p. 12.

their medium. Rather, by one "language" into another, he means speaking into drama, drama into dance, dance into music, and so on. Here, each art is understood as a "language" capable of bearing meaning, meaning being what is translatable from one to another.

The substance of myth as used by Levi-Strauss lies "in the story which it tells."⁵ The defining character of myth, and what gives myth its "operational value," is that "the specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future."⁶ This "pattern" is what myth is, the structure of the contents of a story. Structure for Levi-Strauss is what his method of interpretation seeks to uncover, and is what is translatable from one language into another. Myth is the meaning story conveys.

Having set forth the potential relevance of Levi-Strauss' method for the interpretation of Biblical narrative and hermeneutic, the problem of the discovery of his method and its explication is now raised. Where does one begin? Levi-Strauss' prolegomenon to the method is his article "The Structural Study of Myth."⁷ Here Levi-Strauss sets forth his understanding of the anatomy of myth and the method by which a myth's structure may be uncovered, illustrating the

⁵Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," first published in the Journal of American Folklore, 68 (1955), 428-44. The article was revised by Levi-Strauss for his Anthropologie Structurale (1958). It was then reprinted in Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology (New York: Basic Books, 1963), pp. 206-231. The 1963 edition will be referred to in this project.

⁶Levi-Strauss, "Structural Study," p. 209.

⁷Ibid., pp. 206-231.

proposed method first on the Oedipus myth, and then on North American mythology. For a second application, Levi-Strauss refers the reader⁸ to "Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch,"⁹ where his purpose is "to analyze the structural relationships among" the four myths published by Paul Radin.¹⁰ Although there are other places where Levi-Strauss applies his method, this project will be limited to Levi-Strauss' method as represented by these two articles, and will undertake to assess the effectiveness of the method for Biblical interpretation from these two articles only. Examination and critique of later works by Levi-Strauss are left to future study.

The effectiveness of Levi-Strauss' method will be assessed in two ways. First, it will be applied to two stories in the Gospel of Mark, the Parable of the Sower and the story of The Woman with the Hemorrhage. The mythic structure of both will be uncovered. Second, the question of what happens in the imagination of the listener when these stories are preached will be raised. This question will be approached by comparing the structure of each story with their respective inversions. Transformation in the imagination will be seen as the transformation of self-understanding, or, the transformation of

⁸Ibid., p. 231.

⁹Claude Levi-Strauss, "Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch," first published in Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin, ed. Stanley Diamond, (New York: 1960), pp. 351-62, reprinted in Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, II (New York: Basic Books, 1976), pp. 198-210. The 1976 edition of the article will be referred to in this project.

¹⁰Levi-Strauss, "Four Winnebago," p. 199.

the mythic structure operative in one's own imagination to a self-understanding informed by the mythic structure of each story.

The explication of Levi-Strauss' method from these two articles comes in Chapter 2. An attempt will be given to understanding the formula¹¹ given at the end of the first article, its meaning and application to the four myths of the Winnebago. Chapter 3 is a critique of the method. In addition to criticizing Levi-Strauss for places in which he is unclear, this chapter will fit Levi-Strauss' method of interpreting myth into his general presuppositions regarding discrimination, binary opposition and mediation as a universal mechanism in human thinking, and raise the question, "Do the data necessitate this universal model?" Chapter 4 will then apply Levi-Strauss' method to the two narratives from the Gospel of Mark. The first part of each of the two sections of this chapter will delineate a text for examination, and the second part will seek to discover the mythic structure of each text.¹² Chapter 5 turns to hermeneutical implications. Here, reflections regarding what happens to the imagination of the listener when the two stories from Mark are preached will be offered, by juxtaposing and evaluating the structure of the two stories and their respective transformations.

¹¹Levi-Strauss, "Structural Study," p. 228.

¹²Since textual criticism is not the primary purpose of this project, the text for the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage will be used as we have it in Mark, and although Weeden's text will be used for the Parable of the Sower, a defense of his text is not offered here. For a complete discussion of his argument, see Theodore J. Weeden, Sr., "The Hermeneutical Eclipse of Jesus' Parabolic Intent in His Parable of the Sower," (Manuscript).

Chapter 2

EXPLICATION OF LEVI-STRAUSS' METHOD

"The Structural Study of Myth"Problems in the Field of Mythology

Levi-Strauss begins his prolegomenon by describing the study of the fields of the anthropology of religions and mythology as "chaotic." This, he feels, is primarily due to the fact that anthropologists have withdrawn from the field of religion, leaving it a "wasteland" open to "all kinds of amateurs" who "seized the opportunity to move in," turning the wasteland "into their private playground" (SA, p. 206). To begin with, anthropologists who had been at work in the field of religion "were psychologically oriented," employing methods Levi-Strauss regards as questionable (SA, p. 206). Then, when the "amateurs" moved in, they "vitiating" the approaches that anthropologists had already been using. The crude methods applied to religion resulted in the naive reduction of the affectivity so commonly present in religion "to inarticulate emotional drives" (SA, p. 207).

Within the field of the anthropology of religion, Levi-Strauss believes that the study of mythology is the most chaotic discipline. Myths are interpreted "as collective dreams, . . . esthetic play, or as the basis of ritual." They are reduced "to a crude kind of philosophic speculation," (SA, p. 207) including explanations for astronomical or meteorological phenomena, etc. In addition to rejecting these explanations as "too elaborate," Levi-Strauss also rejects myth

as factual description of psychological or sociological processes operant in the communities that shape and tell the myth. Indeed, Levi-Strauss implies that myths have little to do with historical fact concerning the peoples who compose them.

Contingency versus Predictability

Levi-Strauss prepares to address the issue of the substance of myth by challenging the question of contingency. He argues that--fantastic as the overt plots of myths the world over may be--there is an "astounding similarity" among myths collected in widely different regions. "Therefore the problem: If the content of a myth is contingent, how are we going to explain the fact that myths throughout the world are so similar" (SA, p. 208)? Levi-Strauss wants to argue that there are structures in myth that are not accidental, but certain and predictable. Within the varieties of myths, Levi-Strauss intends to show that there are certain invariants. His method will attempt to reveal the invariants and to substantiate this thesis.

The Substance of Myth

The question of the substance of myth, or what constitutes myth, is Levi-Strauss' first issue as he turns to methodology. What is the distinguishing character of myth, and how is it discovered? To address this problem, Levi-Strauss compares the properties of myth with properties already known in language. He argues that myth, if its properties are to be understood, "cannot simply be treated as language," because "myth is language: to be known, myth has to be

told; it is a part of human speech" (SA, p. 209). Therefore Levi-Strauss must demonstrate that, although sharing properties with language, myth is also something different. To solve this initial--if rather crucial--problem, Levi-Strauss borrows a linguistic distinction from Saussure, the "distinction between langue and parole." Langue is "the structural side of language" and is synchronic. Parole, on the other hand, is the "statistical aspect" of language, and is diachronic. Langue, then, is reversible, and parole is non-reversible (SA, p. 209). Given that these two sides of language already exist, Levi-Strauss suspects the existence of a third referent, which can be isolated and which will combine the synchronic and diachronic referents already present in language. He bases this hypothesis on a brilliant insight: Although "a myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place long ago, . . . it explains the present and the past as well as the future" precisely because "the specific pattern described is timeless" (SA, p. 209). This is what gives myth both its "operational value," and its character.

Levi-Strauss is suggesting that although myth utilizes properties already found in ordinary language, the specific qualities giving myth its character must lie "above the ordinary linguistic level, . . . exhibit(ing) more complex features than those which are to be found in any other kind of linguistic expression" (SA, p. 210). Since the "operational value" of myth lies in its pattern, the meaning of myth must reside--not in "isolated elements," but--"in the way those elements are combined" (SA, p. 210).

Given this situation ("at least as a working hypothesis"),
 Levi-Strauss argues that "two consequences" follow (SA, p. 210):

(1) Myth, like the rest of language, is made up of constituent units. (2) These constituent units presuppose the constituent units present in language when analyzed on other levels--namely phonemes, morphemes, and sememes--but they, nevertheless, differ from the latter in the same way as the latter differ among themselves; they belong to a higher and more complex order. For this reason, we shall call these gross constituent units (SA, p. 210-11).

Since the constituent units of myth presuppose linguistic units operative in normal speech such as "phonemes, morphemes, or sememes" (SA, p. 211), Levi-Strauss seeks "mythemes" on a "higher" level. He suggests looking on the "sentence level." He therefore breaks the myth down into "the shortest possible sentences, writing each sentence on an index card bearing a number corresponding to the unfolding of the story" (SA, p. 211). Each card should "show that a certain function is, at a given time, linked to a given subject. Or, to put it otherwise, each gross constituent unit will consist of a relation" (SA, p. 211).

At this point, Levi-Strauss is aware of two immediate problems: First, linguists have long known that constituent units present in language are composed of relations. Second, in addressing the substance of myth, he has already argued that myth is both synchronic and diachronic. But, the breaking down of a myth into "the shortest possible sentences" remains a diachronic unfolding of the narrative. To solve these problems, Levi-Strauss now puts forth

a new hypothesis, which constitutes the very core of (his) argument: The true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but bundles of such relations, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning (SA, p. 211).

A constituent unit, then, is composed of sentences located "diachronically at remote intervals." Sentences bearing similar subject-function relations are combined to form the true constituent unit of myth, the mytheme. The meaning of the myth will lie in the relationships between these mythemes, or bundles of relations. The final result of combining similar subject-function relations into mythemes is

a time referent of a new nature, corresponding to the prerequisite of the initial hypothesis, namely a two-dimensional time referent which is simultaneously diachronic and synchronic, and which accordingly integrates the characteristics of langue on the one hand and parole on the other (SA, 211-12).

This "two-dimensional time referent," Levi-Strauss compares to an orchestra score (SA, p. 212), which also combines synchronic and diachronic referents. Melody is diachronic, and is read from left to right. Harmony, on the other hand, is synchronic, and is read from top to bottom. The job of the conductor is to synchronize each of the instruments, so that as the symphony orchestra plays diachronically, the sound will be harmonious! The conductor reads the score both from top to bottom and from left to right.

Method

The Oedipus myth. "For a concrete example of the method"

Levi-Strauss proposes, he turns to the Oedipus myth (SA, p. 213). He emphasizes that he is not offering a rigorous scientific explanation of the Oedipus myth, rather, the type of "demonstration" a "street peddler" might give of a "mechanical toy which he is trying to sell to the on-lookers" (SA, p. 213).

The first step in the analysis is to break the myth down "into the shortest possible sentences" (SA, p. 211), and to write each sentence on an index card. Sentences of similar subject-function relation are then gathered. Levi-Strauss explains this technique in the following way: "Confronted with a sequence of the type: 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 1, 2, 5, 7, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 . . . , " we note that the same numbers are scattered diachronically throughout the sequence of numbers. The initial technique is "to put all the 1's together, all the 2's, the 3's, etc.: the result is the following chart" (SA, p. 213):

1	2		4			7	8
	2	3	4		6		8
1			4	5		7	8
1	2			5		7	
		3	4	5	6		8

Applied to the Oedipus myth, the analyst first breaks the myth down "into the shortest possible sentences, writing each sentence on a numbered index card." The number corresponds to its diachronic location in the unfolding of the story. Each card would read as follows:

- 1) Cadmos seeks his sister Europa, ravished by Zeus.
- 2) Cadmos kills the dragon.
- 3) Spartoi kill one another.
- 4) Labdacos (Laios' father)=lame (?).
- 5) Oedipus kills his father, Laios.
- 6) Laios (Oedipus' father)=left-sided (?).
- 7) Oedipus kills the Sphinx
- 8) Oedipus=swollen-foot (?).
- 9) Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta.

10) Eteocles kills his brother, Polynices.

11) Antigone buries her brother, Polynices, despite prohibition.

Second, cards bearing similar subject-function relations are gathered and placed in vertical columns. Although a "specialist" might suggest improvements, Levi-Strauss suggests the following arrangement (SA, p. 214):

Cadmos seeks
his sister Eu-
ropa, ravished
by Zeus

Cadmos kills
the dragon

The Spartoi kill
one another

Labdacos (Laios'
father)=lame (?)

Oedipus kills
his father,
Laios

Laios (Oedipus'
father)=left-
sided (?)

Oedipus kills
the Sphinx

Oedipus=swollen-
foot (?)

Oedipus marries
his mother,
Jocasta

Eteocles kills
his brother,
Polynices

Antigone buries
her brother,
Polynices, de-
spite prohibition

The result is "four vertical columns." Similar to an orchestra score, all sentences in a column are combined to give a meaning, and each column is "read" as a unit. The meaning the myth bears will reside in the relationships among columns. The third task, then, is to discover the substance of each column, by comparing subject-function relations. "All the relations belonging to the same columns exhibit one common feature which it is our task to discover" (SA, p. 215).

As all elements of column one have to do with blood relations that are too intimate, or, overemphasized, Levi-Strauss calls column one the "overrating of blood relations" (SA, p. 215). Likewise, column two bears an inverse relationship to column one. Here, blood relations are killing one another, and so, Levi-Strauss calls this the "underrating of blood relations" (SA, p. 215). The subjects of column three slay monsters--one a dragon and the other the Sphinx. "The dragon is a chthonian being which has to be killed in order that mankind be born from the earth; the Sphinx is a monster unwilling to permit men to live" (SA, p. 215). Regarding the significance of column four, Levi-Strauss notes first that the names of column four "refer to difficulties in walking," and second, that "in mythology it is a universal characteristic of men born from the Earth that at the moment they emerge from the depth they either cannot walk or they walk clumsily" (SA, p. 215). He therefore argues that the meanings of the names of column four combine to signify "the persistence of the autochthonous origin of man" (SA, p. 216).

The four columns, then may be summarized as follows:

Column 1 - Overrating of blood relations

Column 2 - Underrating of blood relations

Column 3 - Denial of the autochthonous origin of man

Column 4 - The persistence of the autochthonous origin of man

Having deciphered the meaning of each column, the fourth step is to analyze the relationships between the columns. "It follows," argues Levi-Strauss, "that column four is to column three as column one is to column two" (SA, p. 216). Or, the persistence of the autochthonous origin of man is to the denial of the autochthonous origin of man as the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations. What does this mean?

The myth has to do with the inability, for a culture which holds the belief that mankind is autochthonous . . . , to find a satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that human beings are actually born from the union of man and woman. Although the problem obviously cannot be solved, the Oedipus myth provides a kind of logical tool which relates the original problem--born from one or born from two?--to the derivative problem: born from different or born from same? By a correlation of this type, the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations as the attempt to escape autochthony is to the impossibility to succeed in it. Although experience contradicts theory, social life validates cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence, cosmology is true (SA, p. 216).

Levi-Strauss gives no further explanation regarding reasons for structural similarity between columns one and two, four and three. However, when I address the meaning of Levi-Strauss' formula (SA, p.228), I shall apply the formula to his proposed structure of the Oedipus myth, to show the nature of structural similarities between the columns, and how the blood-relation opposition can replace--and in part, resolve--the initial problem with regards to autochthony versus bisexual reproduction.

Before leaving the Oedipus myth, Levi-Strauss raises an issue that has "worried specialists," namely, the problem of finding the earliest version of a myth in order to obtain the most authentic form. For Levi-Strauss, an original version will not finally constitute the myth proper, rather, myth is composed of the sum-total of its variants. Levi-Strauss defines "myth as consisting of all its versions; or to put it otherwise, a myth remains the same as long as it is felt as such" (SA, p. 217). Myth is the structure of the contents of the entire complex, and therefore for Oedipus includes Freud as well as Sophocles. "Although the Freudian problem has ceased to be that of autochthony versus bisexual reproduction, it is still the problem of understanding how one can be born from two" (SA, p. 217). And since all versions constitute the myth, "structural analysis should take all of them into account" (SA, p. 217).

How would this work? In the analysis of the Oedipus myth, the structure is two-dimensional, with a single column forming a gross constituent unit, or mytheme. This same technique is then applied to other versions of the myth, the result being a collection of two-dimensional structures. These two-dimensional structures are then aligned or placed on top of one another. The number of mythemes increases, correlating mythemes are grouped together, and then binary oppositions and resolutions are sought. The resulting structure is myth in the true sense of the term, and represents the logic by which all of the different versions of myth operate. Variations coming with different versions are then understood in light of the entire structure. Although all "charts cannot be expected to be

identical," Levi-Strauss' "experience shows that any difference to be observed may be correlated with other differences" (SA, p. 217). What Levi-Strauss means here is that where one version has two mythemes A and B, should a second show a mytheme -A, it will also show a corresponding mytheme -B.¹

At this point in the analysis, Levi-Strauss moves towards a "structural law of myth" (SA, p. 217), by presenting the results of his analysis "of the Zuni origin and emergence myth" (SA, p. 219).

The Zuni myth. Because of "the bulk of material" required for an analysis of the several collected versions of the Zuni myth, Levi-Strauss offers no rigorous analysis, however, it is possible to discern some new aspects of his technique which he does not spell-out overtly. His goal in analyzing the Zuni complex is to discover "a previously unnoticed kind of logical operation" (SA, p. 219), which is the structure of the myth, and then, coupling results of his analysis of the Zuni complex with those of the Oedipus myth, to arrive at a general structural law of the substance of myth (SA, p. 228), which will then need to be validated and refined by future study.

Levi-Strauss' rigorous analysis, which he does not share in the article, apparently consists of the same kind of analysis which he performs on the Oedipus myth applied to each version of the "Zuni origin and emergence myth" (SA, p. 219). This would give Levi-Strauss

¹In his analysis of the "Four Winnebago Myths," Levi-Strauss gives a specific example of this transformation within a mythic structure (see SA II, p. 204).

a two-dimensional structure for each version. Each two-dimensional structure would consist of a given number of mythemes. He then takes each of these structures and seeks binary oppositions and resolutions to these oppositions through mediating mythemes within certain categories or orders.

The order which he develops the fullest, and which aids him in both explaining the nature of mediation and the general law of the structure of myth is the order of life and death. Indeed, life and death, although not overtly present as mythemes, do constitute the fundamental binary opposition of the mythic structure (SA, p. 220,224). (This fundamental opposition is analogous to the opposition between autochthony versus bisexual reproduction in the Oedipus myth.) The secondary opposition, which attempts to replace or resolve the first (and is analogous to the opposition between the overrating and under-rating of blood relations in the Oedipus myth) is between agriculture and warfare. Although it is not the case with the Oedipus myth, in the Zuni myth, the secondary opposition is of the same order as the primary opposition, namely, life and death. "Agriculture provides food, therefore life" (SA, p. 221). On the other hand, warfare causes death. This secondary opposition admits a third mytheme, hunting, which mediates between agriculture and warfare, precisely because it combines features from both opposing mythemes. Like agriculture, hunting provides food, and hence, life; but like warfare, hunting includes killing, and hence death. This structure--a fundamental opposition between life and death, replaced by a secondary opposition between agriculture and warfare, which admits a third term, hunting, which

functions as mediator--constitutes the basic logic structuring the overt contents of each version of the emergence myth of the Zuni.²

In summary, the mythic structure of the Zuni complex consists of a fundamental binary opposition, life versus death. This opposition is the problem the mythic structure tries to resolve. The structure solves the initial problem by introducing a second opposition, which is less severe and replaces the first. This second opposition solves the first in two ways. First, both mythemes of the second opposition have something in common with each of the mythemes of the first opposition. Like death, warfare kills. But like life, warfare is life killing life. Agriculture, like life, gives life. However, death is a part of the agricultural process in that agriculture is seasonal. Second, the opposition between agriculture and warfare admits a third term, hunting, which mediates between these two terms. Like agriculture, hunting produces food, but like warfare, it involves killing. This is the nature of a mediating term--to combine qualities of both terms of the opposition it resolves.

The formula. Having presented this example of polar opposition resolved by mediation, Levi-Strauss is then prepared to propose a formula which describes a structural law of myth (SA, p. 228).

²When we analyze the Winnebago myths, it will be the fundamental opposition and its two variations, which will determine the basic structure of the myth.

$$Fx(a) : Fy(b) :: Fx(b) : Fa-1(y)$$

Here, with two terms, "a" and "b," being given as well as two functions "x" and "y," of these terms, it is assumed that a relation of equivalence exists between two situations defined respectively by an inversion of terms and relations, under two conditions, (1) that one term be replaced by its opposite (in the formula, "a" and "a-1"; (2) that an inversion be made between the function value and the term value of two elements (above, "y" and "a").

In the above formula, the terms $Fx(a)$ and $Fy(b)$ refer to the mythemes which compose the fundamental opposition of the mythic structure. The formula means that the mythemes consist of two subjects, (a) and (b).³ The first subject, (a), functions in the manner "x." $Fx(a)$, therefore, means "the function 'x' of the subject (a)," or, "(a) performs the function 'x'." In like manner, $Fy(b)$ means "the function 'y' of the subject (b)." They read, "the 'f'-'x' of 'a'" and "the 'f'-'y' of 'b'." These two terms represent two opposite subjects functioning in opposite ways. The secondary opposition, which replaces the first, is represented by the terms $Fx(b)$ and $Fa-1(y)$, where *again*, each term represents a mytheme. Although the two terms oppose each other, the opposition is less severe because $Fx(b)$ combines semantic features from both terms of the fundamental opposition, "x" and (b). Here, we have a subject (b) functioning in an "x"-manner, which is the way the subject (a) of the original opposition functions. The term $Fx(b)$ is opposed to $Fa-1(y)$, which is more peculiar than $Fx(b)$. It combines the subject (a) with the function "y," however, it inverts

³In order to distinguish functions and subjects, I will put functions in quotes and subject in parentheses.

them in two ways: First, (a) is "replaced by its opposite" (SA, p. 228), (a-1). Second, (a-1) becomes a function, and "y" becomes a subject. The subject (y) performs the function "a-1".

Unfortunately, having given this formula, Levi-Strauss does not then demonstrate precisely how it fits either of the ~~two~~ mythic structures he uses for examples. It is therefore left to us to make such an attempt.

The Zuni mythic structure as suggested by Levi-Strauss consists of a primary opposition between death and life, and a secondary opposition between warfare and agriculture. Hunting mediates between warfare and agriculture. The schema, as he sets it up is as follows:⁴

Life

Agriculture

Hunting

Warfare

Death

If I begin by assigning $F_x(a)$ and $F_y(b)$ to death and life respectively, we obtain the following results: The subject (a) is "death." The function "x" of death is "killing." The subject (b) is "life," and the function "y" is "to give life." Next, I will assign $F_x(b)$ to

⁴Levi-Strauss does not give sufficient terms in his formula to cover more than the fundamental and secondary oppositions. Therefore, not all mythemes from p. 224 are listed.

warfare and $Fa-1(y)$ to agriculture. Taking first the term warfare, I have already suggested the subject (b) as "life" and the function "x" as "killing." Combined as the $Fx(b)$, they would read, "life killing." This describes warfare perfectly, as in warfare, live humans kill. The term $Fa-1(y)$ is more complicated. I have suggested that the function "y" is "to give life." Inverted to subject-value, "to give life" becomes "life-giver" or "life-given." Unfortunately, Levi-Strauss does not tell us whether the inversion of "y" into (y) merely describes the subject-value, or, if it also represents passivity, meaning that the subject is subject because it is the result of having had the function "y" performed on it. The subject (a) is "death." Its opposite, (a-1), would be "un-death." Inverted to a function, it becomes "un-dying" or "growing." The term $Fa-1(y)$, then, describes agriculture as the life-given or life-giver overcoming death, or growing. This term is an accurate description of agriculture in the mythic terms that Levi-Strauss suggests.

Although Levi-Strauss' formula ends here, it is easy to press it one step further with hunting, which would combine the function "x" of warfare, "killing," with the subject (y) of agriculture, (life-giver). The result would be $Fx(y)$, a life-giver killing, which is an accurate description of hunting. The schema for this myth would appear as follows:

Fy(b) - Life
(life) to give life

Fa-1(y) - Agriculture
(life-giver) to overcome
death and grow

Fx(y) - Hunting
(life-giver) to kill

Fx(b) - Warfare
(life) to kill

Fx(a) - Death
(death) to kill

Levi-Strauss' formula fits the Zuni mythic structure as he discerns it.

Next, I will apply the formula to the Oedipus myth. The fundamental opposition as worked out by Levi-Strauss is the persistence of autochthony versus the denial of autochthony (SA, p. 216). This opposition is replaced by a second pair of opposites, the overrating of blood relations versus the underrating of blood relations. The first step is to assign Fx(a) to the persistence of autochthony, and Fy(b) to the denial of autochthony. Taking the subjects of both terms, Levi-Strauss has told us that with autochthony, "one" gives birth, and of course, with bisexual reproduction, "two" (SA, p. 216). I will therefore assign "one" to (a) and "two" to (b). Next, I will address the functions of these two subjects. The function of autochthony is what--for lack of a better term--I shall call "to auto-originate," hence, Fx(a) is "one auto-originating." The function in the denial of autochthony is "bisexual reproduction," hence, Fy(b) is "two reproducing bisexually." Turning now to the second pair of opposites, I

will assign $Fx(b)$ to the overrating of blood relations, and, $Fa-1(y)$ to the underrating of blood relations. Since we already know the function "x" and the subject (b), I can merely combine them, to see if they work. The function "x" is "to auto-originate" and the subject (b) is "two." $Fx(b)$, then, is "two auto-originating," an excellent description of the overrating of blood relations. Finally, I turn to $Fa-1(y)$, the most difficult term to discern. I have pointed out that Levi-Strauss does not tell us if the function "y" transformed to a subject (y) merely describes the subject-value as the subject's active condition, or the subject-value as passive condition, in that (y) is the result of having suffered the function "y," or both. In this mythic structure, then, (y) could either mean "bisexually reproduced" or "bisexual reproducer." In this case, it may refer to the former, because "bisexually reproduced" or "bisexually given in birth" more closely describes "blood relation." Now, turning to the function "a-1," since (a) refers to "one," (a-1) will be its opposite, "not-one" or "un-one." Transformed into a function, it becomes "the elimination of one-ness" or "the elimination of kinship." It must be emphasized at this point that for Levi-Strauss, structure is content, and therefore, functions cannot be separated from subjects, and so, the true test lies in the unit-term, $Fa-1(y)$. It would read, "the elimination of kinship of one bisexually reproduced," which is the same as killing a blood relation. The schema for this structure may be represented as follows:

Fy(b) - Denial of autochthony
 (two) to reproduce bisexually

Fa-1(y) - Underrating of blood
 relations
 (bisexually reproduced) to
 eliminate kinship

Fx(b) - Overrating of blood
 relations
 (two) to auto-originate

Fx(a) - Persistence of autochthony
 (one) to auto-originate

Tentatively, at least, it would appear that Levi-Strauss' formula is an excellent description of the structure of both myths as he has understood them.

The mediator. In analyzing mythic structure, it should be noted that mediating terms mediate precisely because they combine features of both terms of the opposition for which they mediate. Levi-Strauss gives a superb example of this when he shows why ravens and coyotes are often assigned the role of trickster in North American mythology. In the category of the obtaining of food (SA, p. 224), ravens and coyotes, carrion-eaters, mediate between herbivorous animals and beasts of prey, because, like "beasts of prey (they eat animal food)," but like herbivores, "(they do not kill what they eat)" (SA, p. 224). In the Oedipus myth, the overrating of blood relations mediates between autochthony and the denial of autochthony because, like the denial of autochthony, these are two sexual partners, but like autochthony, they are auto-originating. Regarding mediating

terms in general, if the terms forming the fundamental opposition are simple, the mediating term will be ambiguous (SA, p. 222). If, on the other hand, the terms of the fundamental opposition are ambiguous, the mediating term will be simple (SA, p. 223).

Summary of the method. Before moving to "Four Winnebago Myths," I will summarize Levi-Strauss' method as developed thus far. First, the myth is broken down "into the shortest possible sentences," and each is written on a card bearing the number indicating its order in the diachronic sequence. Second, cards bearing similar subject-function relations are grouped together and placed in vertical columns. Third, the content of each column is summarized. Fourth, binary oppositions are sought among columns, each column representing a gross constituent unit, or, mytheme. Binary oppositions are sought within categories dictated by the myth. In performing steps three and four, one must note that as Levi-Strauss uses the term "content," content is content only in relation to the whole structure. For example, one character in a story might be a mother or wife. One only knows she is a mother or wife because of the relationship to her children or husband. So, the true summarizing of the content of a mytheme only comes as steps three and four are done together. Fifth, if possible, a basic structure or logic of the myth is discerned: Of the binary oppositions discovered, which is the most severe? Which opposition, if any, replaces the first opposition. Are there mediating mythemes? If so, how do they mediate? What is the mediator's relation to the whole structure? A statement is then made with regards to the

relations among columns i.e. column one is to column two as column three is to column four, etc.

"Four Winnebago Myths"

Purpose

In "Four Winnebago Myths," Levi-Strauss applies his method to four myths which anthropologist Paul Radin has collected and grouped together. His purpose is to show that Radin was correct in grouping them together because of "a deep unity" due to similarity in "structural relationships" (SA II, p. 199). My purpose in examining this article is to better understand his method and the meaning of his formula.

First Myth

The title of the first myth is "The Two Friends Who Became Reincarnated: The Origin of the Four Nights' Wake." Levi-Strauss begins his analysis--not by breaking the myth down "into the shortest possible sentences" and writing each sentence on a card, but--by summarizing the myth:

This is the story of two friends, one of them a chief's son, who decide to sacrifice their lives for the welfare of the community. After their death, they undergo a series of ordeals in the underworld, and finally reach the lodge of Earthmaker, who permits them to become reincarnated and to resume their previous lives among their relatives and friends.

Next, he gives ethnographic data, consisting of "native theory underlying the myth" (SA II, p. 199). It is believed by the Winnebago natives that each person is given a quota of years to live. If the

individual "lets himself be killed by enemies" for the sake of the community, "the unspent life . . . will be added to the capital of life, set up in trust for the group" (SA II, p. 199). At the same time, the individual profits, by gaining an infinite series of half-lives plus incarnations. Hence, "everybody gains in the process" (SA II, pp. 199-200): Ordinary people gain time to live, and the hero, although giving-up his quota, gains in half-lives and reincarnations.

This ethnographic data is important for interpreting the myth, in Levi-Strauss' view, because the heroes "sacrifice their lives for the welfare of the community" (SA II p. 199). Since this is self-sacrifice, it is not a motivated giving of one's life for selfish purposes. Therefore, "the heroes . . . will be permitted to return to earth," and the community "will inherit the unspent portion of the heroes' lives, given-up for their benefit" (SA II p. 200).

After furnishing relevant ethnographic data, Levi-Strauss turns back to the myth, looking for binary oppositions within certain levels or categories. The first category is "life" and the opposition is "between ordinary life and heroic life, the former realizing the full life span, not renewable, the latter gambling with life for the benefit of the group" (SA II, p. 201). The second category is "death," and the "opposition is between two kinds of death, one straight and final . . .; the other oscillating, and swinging between life and death" (SA II, p. 201).

The meaning or structure of the myth is summarized by Levi-Strauss as follows (SA II, p. 201):

To sum up the meaning of the myth so far: If one wants a full life, one gets a full death; if one renounces life and seeks death, then one increases the full life of his fellow-tribesmen, and secures for oneself a state composed of an indefinite series of half-lives and half-deaths.

It should be noted that thus far, Levi-Strauss' technique has been slightly different from what he suggests in "The Structural Study of Myth." Instead of combining sentences bearing similar subject-function relations into mythemes and then seeking binary oppositions, here he gives a synopsis of the myth. The sentences of his synopsis are then treated by Levi-Strauss as mythemes. Then, aided by relevant ethnographic data, Levi-Strauss determines categories in which he looks for binary oppositions. Although Levi-Strauss does not explain precisely how it is done, the determining of appropriate categories becomes crucial in the applying of this technique.

Neither does Levi-Strauss apply or evaluate the formula he proposes at the end of "The Structural Study of Myth" (SA, p. 228). Therefore, I will apply the formula to the myth under analysis, to see if it coincides with the structure as proposed by Levi-Strauss.

The mythemes which constitute the fundamental opposition as proposed by Levi-Strauss are the "heroic life" and the "ordinary life." The terms from the formula which are assigned to the fundamental opposition are $Fx(a)$ and $Fy(b)$. I will therefore assign $Fx(a)$ to "heroic life" and $Fy(b)$ to "ordinary life." The heroic life is sacrificial, and so, I will call "sacrificial" the subject (a). The function of

the "heroic life" is "to half live and half die." This, I shall assign to "x." Thus the entire term, $Fx(a)$, is read, "the half living and half dying of the sacrificial." Unlike the heroic life, the ordinary life is what I shall call "secure," assigning this to (b). The function of the ordinary life is "to fully live." $Fy(b)$ therefore means that "the secure fully lives," an accurate description of "ordinary life" as described by Levi-Strauss. Levi-Strauss' formula assigns $Fx(b)$ and $Fa-1(y)$ to the secondary opposition, which he has called "oscillating between life and death" versus "straight and final death." I will assign $Fx(b)$ to "oscillating between life and death." The function and subject are already determined from the fundamental opposition: "x" is "to half live and half die" and (b) is "secure." $Fx(b)$, then, refers to the secure half-living and half-dying. Since, according to Levi-Strauss, the hero "secures for (himself) a state composed of an indefinite series of half-lives and half-deaths" (SA II, p. 201), $Fx(b)$ accurately describes "oscillating between life and death." The final term of the formula, $Fa-1(y)$ is now assigned to "straight and final death." The subject (y) is the inversion of the function "y;" "to fully live" becomes "fully alive." This agrees with Levi-Strauss' statement that straight and final death "provides a type of unearthly immortality in the villages of the dead" (SA II, p. 201). The subject (a), "sacrificial," becomes (a-1), "unsacrificial," and is then transformed into a function, "to die a natural death." $Fa-1(y)$, therefore, means that "the fully alive has died a natural death." The entire schema would appear as follows:

Fy(b) - Ordinary life
(secure) to fully live

Fa-1(y) - Straight and final
death
(fully alive) to die a
natural death

Fx(b) - Oscillating between
life and death
(secure) to half live and
half die

Fx(a) - Heroic life
(sacrificial) to half live
and half die

This formula means that the heroic life is to the ordinary life as oscillating between life and death is to straight and final death, or the half living and half dying of the sacrificial is to the fully living of the secure as the half living and half dying of the secure is to the natural death of the fully alive. We may conclude that Levi-Strauss' formula provides an accurate description of the first of the four Winnebago myths as he has interpreted it.

Second Myth

The second myth is entitled "The Man Who Brought His Wife Back from Spiritland" (SA II p. 201). Although this myth is a variation of the first myth, "The Two Friends Who Became Reincarnated," the mythic structure of both myths, suggests Levi-Strauss, are identical. In the second myth, we also "find a hero . . . ready to sacrifice his unspent life span" (SA II, p. 201). The difference between this myth and the first is on the level of overt plot, and has to do with the beneficiary

of the unspent life span. Here, instead of the community, the beneficiary is "one individual," his beloved wife (SA II, p. 201). This difference, however, does not change the basic structure, an opposition between oscillating between life and death versus straight and final death. The second myth still operates within this structure.

Third Myth

Likewise, the third myth operates according to the same structure as the first two. The only two differences lie in the overt plot: First, the self-sacrifice is symbolic. Second, the individuals themselves are the beneficiaries of a lengthened life-span. By symbolically training themselves "to self-sacrifice they have, so to speak, mithridatized themselves against real death by renouncing a full ordinary life which is replaced in ritual practice, by a lifelong succession of half-lives and half-deaths" (SA II, p. 202).

Fourth Myth

The fourth myth is entitled "How an Orphan Restored the Chief's Daughter to Life" (SA II, p. 202). It is both the last myth which Levi-Strauss addresses in this article, and, the myth to which he gives the most attention. The added attention is given for two reasons: First, the myth exhibits unusual features relative to the first three myths. Second, it has been puzzling to Radin, who has sought explanation for the unusual features on the level of literary tradition and reconstruction. Levi-Strauss applauds Radin's work and argument that the myth does indeed belong to the group. However, Levi-Strauss wants

to use an entirely different method, and hence, level, for explicating both the structure of the myth, and why it belongs to the group. Levi-Strauss' level is "logical rather than historical, and it takes as its context the three myths already discussed--not Winnebago culture, old or recent" (SA II, p. 203). Levi-Strauss will seek a "structural relationship . . . between the four myths."

Levi-Strauss first points to a mistake anthropologists often make, to presuppose that elements of the social structure of the people who shape the myth are always reflected in the overt plot. Although some culture does pass into some myths, not all myths reflect culture (SA II, p. 203-4).

There must be, and there is, a correspondence between the unconscious meaning of a myth--the problem it tries to solve--and the conscious content it makes use of to reach that end, i.e., the plot. However, this correspondence is not necessarily an exact reproduction; it can also appear as a logical transformation. If the problem is presented in straight terms--that is, in the way the social life of the group expresses and tries to solve it--the overt content of the myth, the plot, can borrow its elements from social life itself. But should the problem be formulated upside down, and its solution sought for ad absurdo, then the overt content can be expected to become modified accordingly to form an inverted image of the social pattern actually present in the consciousness of the natives (SA II, p. 204).

Levi-Strauss will argue that the fourth myth probably reflects nothing regarding the history or culture of the Winnebago people, precisely because the mythic structure is inverted, and the resolution to the problem, the opposition between heroic and ordinary lives, is sought ad absurdo. As I pointed out earlier in this project, if a mytheme A is replaced by -A, then, a corresponding B will be replaced by -B, where -A and -B are understood as logical transformations of A and B. Hence, -A may be a transformation "A₄" of A, which is already

known to us under three guises, A_1 , A_2 , (and) A_3 ," none of which are identical in overt plot (SA II, p. 204).

Radin provides a brief summary of the very simple plot of the fourth myth, which Levi-Strauss quotes:

The daughter of a tribal chief falls in love with an orphan, dies of a broken heart, and is then restored to life by the orphan who must submit to and overcome certain tests, not in spiritland but here, on earth, in the very lodge in which the young woman died (SA II, p. 203).

Agreeing "with Radin, that it exhibits 'unusual' features in relation to the other three," Levi-Strauss now explains why the difference is logical "rather than . . . sociological or historical" (SA II, p. 205). Within the fundamental binary opposition, ordinary versus extraordinary life (before, he has called this heroic life), this myth introduces a new secondary opposition to replace the first. This secondary opposition is on the level of characters, or, *dramatis personae*, and opposes the chief's daughter and the orphan. Both of them are extraordinary, but in inverse ways. The chief's daughter is culturally above standard, but naturally below standard: She "occupies a high social position" (SA II, p. 205), the reason Levi-Strauss construes her as culturally high. However, the result of her high social status is that she is so far above the rest of the group that she is "paralyzed when it comes to expressing her feelings" (SA II, p. 205). This makes her "defective (as a) human being, lacking an essential attribute of emotional life" (SA II, p. 205), and hence, naturally low. The boy, on the other hand, is culturally below standard while naturally above: The fact that he is an orphan accounts for his low cultural standard, yet, he is a great hunter, which

accounts for his high natural standard (SA II, p. 205-6).

Levi-Strauss summarizes this mythic juxtaposition of two inverted figures as follows (SA II, p. 206):

May we not therefore claim that the myth actually confronts us with a polar system bringing together--and at the same time opposing--two individuals, one male, the other female, and both exceptional insofar as each of them is overgifted one way (+) and undergifted in the other (-)?

Nature		Culture
Boy	+	-
Girl	-	+

The result of this disequilibrium is that "the girl dies a natural death; the boy stays alone and goes through a social death" (SA II, p. 206).

In Radin's reconstruction of the myth, he had been presupposing that elements of the myth must reflect something sociological or cultural in the history of the Winnebago. However, this myth reflects sociological elements which would certainly be questioned by a "modern Winnebago" (SA II, p. 203). Levi-Strauss' method offers solutions to the problems Radin has raised. The first problem is that the myth reflects a stratified society. Levi-Strauss says that this is "because the two heroes are conceived as a pair of opposites" (SA II, p. 207). However, this opposition is "a projection on some imaginary social order of a logical structure wherein all the elements are given both in opposition and in correlation" (SA II, p. 207). The second problem is of the same nature, and Levi-Strauss offers the same solution. In this myth, women seem to occupy a high social position. Again, Levi-

Strauss argues that this is because of the logic of the myth which offers an imaginary resolution to a problem--the imaginary solution representing an inversion of Winnebago social structure. The third problem is that in Winnebago mythology, the tests usually take place "in the land of ghosts," not on earth (SA II, p. 203). Again, Levi-Strauss' solution is logical: Since the heroes underlive on earth, in death, they "become a kind of superdead" (SA II, p. 208).

As with the other myths which Levi-Strauss has analyzed in the two articles under consideration, his formula (SA, p. 228) is not applied. I will now apply the formula to his analysis of the myth, which should also give some insight regarding what Levi-Strauss means by the solution of a problem being sought ad absurdo, and also what he means by the inversion of a structure.

Like in the first three myths, the fundamental binary opposition is between "ordinary" life and "extraordinary" (before, called "heroic") life. In applying the formula to the first three myths, I assigned $Fx(a)$ to "extraordinary" (heroic) life and $Fy(b)$ to "ordinary" life. For the fourth myth, however, I will do just the opposite: I will now assign $Fx(a)$ to "ordinary" life and $Fy(b)$ to "extraordinary" life. The subject (a) of "ordinary life" is "natural life," and its function "x" is "to die a natural death." "Extraordinary life" is a highly cultured life, so I shall assign "cultural life" to (b) and "to die a cultural death" to the function "y." $Fx(a)$, then, is "the natural death of natural life," and $Fy(b)$ is "the cultural death of cultural life." To the secondary opposition, between the girl and the boy, I shall assign $Fx(b)$ to the girl and $Fa-1(y)$ to the boy. Taking the function "x"

from above, "to die a natural death," and the subject (b), "cultural," the result is an excellent description of the girl as given by Levi-Strauss, for though highly cultural, she "dies a natural death" (SA II, p. 206). Now turning to the boy as $Fa-1(y)$, the subject (y) is the inversion of the function "y," which becomes "culturally dead." To obtain the function "a-1," we take the opposite of the subject (a), "natural life," which is (a-1), "un-natural life," and then transform it into a function. The result is "a-1," "unnatural living" or, "unable to live naturally." Again, this fits Levi-Strauss' description of the boy (SA II, p. 206-7). Taken as a whole, the mythic structure according to the formula would read: Ordinary life is to extraordinary life as the girl is to the boy; or, the natural death of one living a natural life is to the cultural death of one living a cultural life as the natural death of one living a cultural life is to the inability of one culturally dead to live. The following schema represents the structure of the fourth myth:

$Fy(b)$ - Extraordinary life
 (cultural life) to die a
 cultural death

$Fa-1(y)$ - Boy
 (culturally dead)
 unable to live

$Fx(b)$ - Girl
 (cultural life)
 to die a natural death

$Fx(a)$ - Ordinary life
 (natural life) to die a
 natural death

Comparsion of Mythic Structures

The formula can now serve as a valuable tool in comparing the structure of myths 1, 2 and 3 with the structure of myth 4, to understand what Levi-Strauss means by inversion or transformation, and hence, what Levi-Strauss means by a mythic structure's solving a problem ad absurdo. Both mythic structures exhibit a fundamental opposition between ordinary and extraordinary life. However, where in the mythic structure of the first three myths, $Fx(a)$ is assigned to extraordinary life and $Fy(b)$ to ordinary life, in the mythic structure of myth 4, the opposite terms are assigned: $Fx(a)$ is assigned to ordinary life and $Fy(b)$ to extraordinary life.

Myths 1, 2, 3	Myth 4
$Fy(b)$ - Ordinary life	$Fy(b)$ - Extraordinary life
$Fx(a)$ - Extraordinary life	$Fx(a)$ - Ordinary life

This becomes significant when one realizes that the functions and subjects composing the secondary oppositions of the two mythic structures will be opposite as well.⁵ What is $Fx(b)$ for the first structure is $Fy(a)$, a non-existent mytheme, for the second structure; and what is $Fa-1(y)$ for the first structure is the non-existent $Fb-1(x)$ of the second.⁶ This means that if $Fx(b)$ and $Fa-1(y)$ do indeed reflect sociological and cultural fact, then $Fy(a)$ and $Fb-1(x)$ will

⁵Although the subjects of the fundamental opposition of myth 4 are slightly different (cultural versus natural as opposed to sacrificial versus secure), the fundamental opposition is still similar to myths 1, 2 and 3.

reflect the inverse of sociological and cultural fact. They do indeed resolve the fundamental opposition, but they do so in absurd terms--in ways that represent neither historical fact nor sociological reality. Rather, they represent an alternative way for myth imaginatively to resolve a problem, contradiction or opposition.

Should future studies show Levi-Strauss' formula to be correct it means that for every mythic problem or contradiction, there will be two types of story, one of which--although it does not necessarily reflect historical fact--resolves the conflict in sociologically realistic terms, and the other, which resolves the conflict in absurd terms, reflecting an inverted social structure.

Summary of Levi-Strauss' Method

There is a problem in summarizing Levi-Strauss' method. In the second article, he does not do precisely what he suggests in his prolegomenon. I will therefore propose a synthesis of the two:

- 1) Read the story.
- 2) List any data (for Levi-Strauss, it is ethnographic data) necessary for understanding conscious processes involved in the overt plot of the story.
- 3) Identify orders, levels and categories in which binary oppositions may be sought.

⁶When I say non-existent, I mean not a part of the structure which Levi-Strauss explicitly spells out in the formula.

- 4) Reduce the story to its shortest possible sentences, writing each on a card, giving particular attention to subjects forming binary oppositions and their functions.
- 5) Arrange the cards into columns. Cards are placed into columns according to common category and similar subject-function relation. Each column constitutes a mytheme.
- 6) Analyze the content of the mythemes and make a summary statement regarding each.
- 7) Place columns into binary oppositions within categories determined in number three above. If a given column has no opposite, it may have an implied opposite which the analyst must determine, or, function as a mediating mytheme.
- 8) Determine which columns constitute the most severe, and hence, fundamental binary opposition.
- 9) Determine which mytheme(s) will serve as either a secondary opposition, or as mediator (a mediator will have features in common with each of the terms in "resolves").
- 10) Make a preliminary statement regarding the relationship among the columns i.e. "Column 1 is to column 2 as column 4 is to column 3."
- 11) Determine within which binary opposition the subject and function-values can most easily be determined.
- 12) If the fundamental opposition is analyzed first, the next step is to determine the column which combines the subject-value of one column with the function-value of the other. That column becomes $Fx(b)$ and the columns constituting the fundamental opposition can appropriately be applied to $Fx(a)$ and $Fy(b)$.

If the secondary opposition can best be analyzed first, the analyst should next determine which mytheme of the secondary opposition combines the subject-value of one column of the fundamental opposition with the function-value of the other. Assign that mytheme $Fx(b)$ and then make appropriate assignments of $Fx(a)$ and $Fy(b)$. The term $Fa-1(y)$ is then applied to the term opposing $Fx(b)$.

- 13) Using the formula, make a statement regarding the structure of the myth.

Chapter 3

CRITIQUE OF LEVI-STRAUSS' METHOD

"The Structural Study of Myth"

That Levi-Strauss notes an "astounding similarity" (SA, p. 208) among myths the world over is--no doubt--an astounding insight! However, brilliant as this insight may be, and profound as its implications may prove, in appraising Levi-Strauss' work, we must proceed with caution, if for no other reason, because we might hope that Levi-Strauss succeeds in what he undertakes.

Levi-Strauss wants to argue that there is a universal unconscious structure of the human mind that imposes form on all reality, including myth.¹ Therefore, even though myths the world over show a variety of overt plot structures, we shall also find in myth certain invariants, universal structures reflecting a universal unconscious structure of the human mind. Levi-Strauss believes that this invariant structure of the mind accounts for the fact that in myth "the specific

¹See Claude Levi-Strauss, "Introduction: History and Anthropology," SA, pp. 1-27. On p. 22, he writes:

"In anthropology as in linguistics, therefore, it is not comparison that supports generalization, but the other way around. If, as we believe to be the case, the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds--ancient and modern, primitive and civilized (as the study of the symbolic function, expressed in language, so strikingly indicates)--it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom, in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and other customs, provided of course that the analysis is carried far enough."

pattern described is timeless" (SA, p. 209). "It explains the past and the present as well as the future" precisely because it is shaped by and reflects an unconscious way of perceiving, ordering and articulating reality. Therefore, if Levi-Strauss can uncover this pattern, he will have obtained vital information with regards to the mechanism of human thinking, how myth functions in the mind of the listener, and how myth ought to be interpreted.

Of course, he is immediately confronted with the problem of method: how does one uncover this structure? Levi-Strauss recognizes myth as both ordinary language and something more: He is insightful in comparing properties found in myth with properties already known in ordinary speech (SA, p. 209). He hypothesizes that since "the specific pattern described is timeless" (SA, p. 209), and since myth, while utilizing properties found in ordinary speech, functions on a "higher" level, that myth must combine synchronic and diachronic referents already operant in ordinary speech, resulting in a third distinct referent, the pattern and contents of which constitute the substance and structure of myth (SA, p. 211-12).

In setting out to identify the constituent units of this structure, Levi-Strauss proceeds by trial and error, looking to the level just "higher" than the ordinary linguistic level; he begins at the "sentence level" (SA, p. 211). Breaking the myth down into "the shortest possible sentences," however, does not yet uncover the mytheme; this level is not "high" enough; the sentence level is still merely diachronic. Since Levi-Strauss has suggested that the mythic referent must combine both synchronic and diachronic properties, he therefore

argues that the true constituent units of myth must combine sentences of similar subject-function relation, separated diachronically at remote intervals throughout the myth (SA, p. 211-12). The result, then, will be composed of a pattern formed by relationships between mythemes, combinations of sentences bearing similar subject-function relations. This pattern is what Levi-Strauss suggests will be myth, reflecting an unconscious universal structure of the human mind, which, because of its structure, will correlate sentences of similar subject-function relation, and oppose sentences of opposite subject-function relation.

Turning to the Oedipus myth (SA, p. 213-214), Levi-Strauss seeks to demonstrate a procedure for uncovering the constituent units, and finally, structure of the myth. He therefore reduces Sophocles' myth "into the shortest possible sentences" (SA, p. 211). It is at this point that we might begin to raise some critical questions with regards to procedure: Is it realistic to assume that a myth of the length and magnitude of Sophocles' "Oedipus the King" can be reduced to a mere eleven sentences? The fact is that one cannot read those eleven sentences and construe a clear understanding of the story's plot and action without first knowing the story. And assuming that this is realistic, why would Levi-Strauss select the eleven sentences that he chooses?

It would appear that Levi-Strauss has some presuppositions in mind which he does not predicate in the spelling-out of his method, which indeed determine both what sentences are selected, and how they are grouped together. The first presupposition that Levi-

Strauss brings to his method is that as the human mind imposes form on reality, it divides data into binary opposition and then seeks resolution to this opposition. This very well may be true, and if it is, Levi-Strauss has given crucial information regarding how the human mind orders reality. However, he neither predicates this important presupposition, nor offers a defense or argument for it. A second presupposition follows from the first: in addition to organizing reality into binary opposition, the mind also divides reality into categories, organizing the categories into binary oppositions and resolutions. Again, although this presupposition becomes clearer as one analyzes Levi-Strauss' method (by giving attention to what he actually does, not what he says he will do), this second presupposition is not spelled-out at all.

These two presuppositions, however, do in fact offer explanation as to why--in analyzing the Oedipus myth--Levi-Strauss chooses the eleven sentences he suggests (SA, p. 214). Levi-Strauss has two categories in mind, which he perceives as organized in binary opposition. The first is the category of incest. This category is manifest in the overt content of the myth, especially in the relationship between Oedipus and his mother, Jocasta. However, we should also note that incest is a taboo, a category with which the anthropologist is frequently concerned. And, given the fact that kinship structure is one of the areas in which Levi-Strauss specializes, it may be that the category of incest is a category that Levi-Strauss brings to his analysis of Oedipus. This is not to suggest that Levi-Strauss is on unsafe ground with this category in relation to the Oedipus myth.

However, if indeed as an anthropologist with the two presuppositions I have suggested, Levi-Strauss does bring the category of incest to his analysis, it may account for his combining a sentence that is overtly incestuous ("Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta") with sentences that are not overtly incestuous ("Cadmos seeks his sister, Europa, ravished by Zeus" and "Antigone buries her brother, Polynices, despite prohibition") to produce a mytheme related to the category of incest, namely the "overrating of blood relations" (SA, p. 215). Levi-Strauss would then go on to understand Oedipus' killing of his father as an inversion and opposition to Oedipus' marriage to, and hence sexual relations with his mother. Oedipus' killing of his father--like his marrying his mother--is on the level of overt plot. But Levi-Strauss is not only understanding these two sentences as a binary opposition, he then goes on to correlate, and hence categorize "The Spartoi kill one another" and "Eteocles kills his brother, Polynices" with "Oedipus kills his father," to form a mytheme, the "underrating of blood relations," which he then opposes to the "overrating of blood relations" (SA, p. 214-15).

This criticism is not to suggest that Levi-Strauss is not proposing an ingenious method. It is to suggest that he has not articulated his presuppositions, where the presuppositions are in fact functioning on the level of hypotheses and determining what Levi-Strauss is doing in his analysis. And if these two hypotheses are important in determining how Levi-Strauss arrives at the first two columns he suggests for the Oedipus myth (SA, p. 214), they are crucial in a critical appraisal of columns three and four, for unlike the

category of incest, the category of autochthony is not present in the overt content of the myth, at least not in the way incest is.

The question we might first raise is, would Levi-Strauss have grouped the three names--Labdacos, Laios and Oedipus (SA, p. 214)--together, had he not already had the category of autochthony in mind? In fact, Levi-Strauss states that one of the reasons he selected the Oedipus myth is that the ancient Greeks held the belief in autochthony (SA, p. 220-21). That Levi-Strauss even suggests the category of autochthony in grouping the names Labdacos, Laios and Oedipus into a mytheme may be an insightful grasp of the narrative impact that limping has on the imagination of the listener. But it seems questionable whether Levi-Strauss would have categorized these three names had he not previously been looking for the category of autochthony. Levi-Strauss has taken note of scholars' puzzlement over the linguistic meaning of the names in the Oedipus myth (SA, p. 215). It appears that--with the category of autochthony--he has offered a solution to confusion over this linguistic problem.

Within the category of autochthony, yet another critical question can be raised: Does Cadmos' killing of the dragon deny autochthony? Levi-Strauss suggests that "the dragon is a chthonian being which has to be killed in order that mankind be born from the Earth" (SA, p. 215). Given autochthony as a category, since the dragon is indeed killed, would not this killing affirm, rather than deny autochthony? And if this is the case, yet another methodological problem would be raised, because Cadmos' killing of the dragon would then be coupled with the three names of column four (SA, p. 214).

We should note that Levi-Strauss protects himself by saying that he offers not a scientific explanation, rather the type of "demonstration" a "street peddler" might give of a "mechanical toy which he is trying to sell to onlookers" (SA, p. 213). In addition, he also offers a supporting argument for his suggesting that Oedipus' killing of the Sphinx denies autochthony (SA, p. 230-31, n. 6). However, given this self-protection, we might nevertheless critique Levi-Strauss for not articulating presuppositions which function as hypotheses that determine his method, and then for not clearly spelling-out this method, which he then goes on to apply to the "Four Winnebago Myths." Levi-Strauss presupposes that the mind orders reality into binary oppositions and that the mind categorizes data by correlating and opposing. The result is that when Levi-Strauss turns to the analysis of a myth, what he actually does is to identify orders, levels and categories in which binary oppositions and resolutions are then sought.

To summarize thus far, Levi-Strauss is ultimately interested in discovering the structure of the mind as manifest in the structure of myth, which is more often than not a corporate composition. He hypothesizes that myth is a referent that combines synchronic and diachronic properties already found in ordinary language. This referent combines these properties because the mind divides reality into binary oppositions, correlating events, characters or orders bearing similar subject-function relation and opposing opposites. This is the hypothesis he is setting-out to prove. The final question that must be raised is, "Does Levi-Strauss succeed in uncovering an invariant

structure, and, is his method valid?" A sufficient number of myths must be tested in order to substantiate Levi-Strauss' hypothesis.

Other points needing clarification might be raised in Levi-Strauss' analysis of the Oedipus myth. On p. 14 above, I have quoted Levi-Strauss' brief and somewhat cryptic interpretation of the Oedipus myth (SA, p. 216). Why does Levi-Strauss stop here? Even though he is not offering a fully rigorous analysis, having proposed his formula (SA, p. 228), he could briefly have set forth further explanation with regards to structural similarities between columns one and two, four and three. If we had been helped to understand that 1) the persistence of autochthony is one auto-originating, 2) the denial of autochthony is two bisexually reproducing, 3) the overrating of blood relations is two auto-originating, and 4) the underrating of blood relations is a bisexually reproduced (human) eliminating kinship, then Levi-Strauss' interpretation (SA, p. 216) is much clearer and more understandable. Not once in either of the articles does Levi-Strauss help us here.

Another place where we might criticize Levi-Strauss for failing to explain himself is in his analysis of the Zuni myth, for here he is doing something different from what he did to the Oedipus myth and is assuming that the reader is following him. It begins with Levi-Strauss' discussion of versions of the Oedipus myth (SA, pp. 216-18). When he finally arrives at the Zuni myth, the reader might be misled to expect Levi-Strauss to perform the same operation on the Zuni myth (SA, p. 219) that he has suggested for the Oedipus myth, when in fact (I presume) he has already performed this operation on each version of the Zuni

myth, although he does not give us the results. What he has actually done is to develop a two-dimensional structure for each version and then to seek binary oppositions from among the collective structures. Two criticisms may be leveled: 1) He does not give clear directions with respect to what he is doing. 2) In not sharing a more rigorous analysis of the various versions, we are unable to gain critical insight into the method he suggests at the outset of this article.

Furthermore, it would have been much more helpful if--in explaining the binary oppositions and resolutions in the Zuni myth (SA, pp. 219-24)--Levi-Strauss had drawn analogies to his previous analysis of the Oedipus myth. Not only would this have shed more light on his technique, it would have assisted the reader in the application of the formula (SA, p. 228). In addition, since Levi-Strauss has not told us what he will actually do--that is, look for binary oppositions within certain orders--he does not tell what those orders are. This is the case in the correlation and opposition of the mythemes agriculture, hunting and warfare.

However, Levi-Strauss has done a good job of explaining the relationship between agriculture, hunting and warfare (SA, p. 221). Indeed, his analysis supports his fundamental hypothesis. The problem is that Levi-Strauss uses this data in the deriving of his formula (SA, p. 228), yet when he puts forth the formula, he explains neither how he arrived at the formula, nor how it relates to any specific myths which he has discussed. He does not tell us that each of the four major terms represent mythemes, that the terms on the left refer to the fundamental opposition, and the terms on the right to the secondary

opposition, or that there is a relationship between this formula and certain orders in which binary oppositions are classified. Even more crucial is the question of precisely why the formula is what it is, particularly the inversionary factor, $Fa^{-1}(y)$. Why is it not $Fy(a)$ or even $Fa(y)$? There are explanations. For example, the overrating of blood relations is a double inversion of the denial of autochthony in that the subject-value (bisexually reproduced) is an inversion of "to reproduce bisexually" and the "elimination of kinship" is an inversion of the subject-value (two) (see p. 24 above). If this formula is accurate, it is a description--in algebraic terms--of the structure of myth as organized by the unconscious human mind. The formula describes the way in which the mind structures the contents. But if this is the case, is not a more detailed explanation warranted? Would not an application of the formula have made his exegesis of the myths clearer while at the same time have tested and given more support to the formula? And why could not Levi-Strauss draw a connection between the formula's description of the structure of myth and the unconscious structure of the human mind? Future studies might very well address these problems.

Where we might fault Levi-Strauss for his lack of explanation with regards to his formula, we certainly cannot fault him for his detailed and enlightening explanation of the function of the mediator in the myths he describes (SA, pp. 221-27). Indeed, this has been an important key to any success that I have had in understanding Levi-Strauss' thesis and method.

"Four Winnebago Myths"

In the final footnote of "The Structural Study of Myth," Levi-Strauss writes, "For another application of this method, see our study 'Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch'" (SA, p. 231, n.8). Turning to this second article, we might therefore expect Levi-Strauss to proceed in the manner which he suggests in the first article. Indeed, not only do we have Levi-Strauss' exegesis of single myths (which in the first article is what he does with Oedipus), we also are given an important example with regards to the way in which a single mythic structure patterns a whole group of myths, and therefore what Levi-Strauss means by the terms "transformation" and "permutation."

The reader, however, may be a little surprised to discover that Levi-Strauss does not proceed in precisely the manner suggested in his prolegomenon, for he begins--not by breaking the myth down "into the shortest possible sentences" (SA, p. 211), but--by summarizing the myth (SA II, p. 199). This is a change in method, which may very well be warranted, that he fails to prepare the reader for. Again, Levi-Strauss has not explained himself. Reasons for this, however, can be uncovered. Levi-Strauss is changing his method slightly. He summarizes the myth because the first step he is proposing is to discover categories and binary oppositions within these categories (SA II, p. 201). The summarizing of the myth we might very well take to be the breaking of the myth down "into the shortest possible sentences" (SA, p. 211), however, if he is then casting the sentences into columns bearing similar subject-function relation, he does not

share this with the reader. This may be unfortunate in that his summarizing technique might support his hypothesis regarding a third referent combining synchronic and diachronic properties of ordinary speech. His summarizing may reflect the mind's tendency to correlate levels of similar subject-function relation by perceiving binary oppositions and resolutions. The step of writing the sentences on cards may be a step we should not be too quick to lose. If Levi-Strauss' hypothesis is correct, it may shed more light on how the mind correlates levels of similar subject-function relation into mythemes.

A new step is added in this article which Levi-Strauss has neither previously suggested nor prepared us for, the giving of relevant ethnographic data signaling conscious ways in which the plot of the myth might be understood (SA II, pp. 199-200). This ethnographic data aids Levi-Strauss in defining categories in which he will seek binary oppositions (SA II, p. 200). Although he has not done it with the clarity of the second article, in a sense, this is what Levi-Strauss has done in explaining the concept of autochthony in the Oedipus myth (SA, pp. 215-16, 230-31 n. 6). He has given ethnographic data which serves to furnish categories in which the listener will unconsciously correlate and oppose different events and sentences throughout the myth. The point to be made here is that the furnishing of ethnographic data can be crucial to the interpreter if levels in which binary oppositions may be sought are not either predicated by the myth or already known to the interpreter.

We become more clearly aware in this article that what Levi-Strauss really does is immediately to seek binary opposition in

categories. Again, we should be cautious in noting that Levi-Strauss is presupposing that the mind divides data into categories and then further discriminates by casting the data into binary oppositions. Indeed, here it becomes clear that Levi-Strauss' fundamental hypothesis is twofold: 1) The human mind classifies data into categories, orders and levels. 2) Within categories, the human mind divides into binary oppositions resolved by mediating categories. The difficult question to address becomes, by what criteria can we determine that Levi-Strauss has adequately supported this hypothesis? Levi-Strauss may not be suggesting that this is the only unconscious structure of the mind, yet, it seems to be the only one he is proposing thus far. The two articles under consideration do in fact support his thesis substantially, however, this kind of all-encompassing thesis can only finally be validated providing it survives the test of time given to numerous studies. My present purpose is to uncover his method which--it turns out--is determined by this very simple, yet possibly extremely profound hypothesis, and to evaluate its effectiveness in interpreting the myths to which Levi-Strauss applies it, and the two Bible stories to which I shall apply it in Chapter 4.

A question to which Levi-Strauss does not address himself, and which certainly deserves attention is, "Since Levi-Strauss is determining categories in which he seeks binary oppositions, how in fact are the categories determined?" The only answer we can conjecture is that we look for categories in the myth itself and in the ethnography of the people who shape the myth. This, of course, can be a problem for the interpreter because where some categories (incest, for

instance) might be familiar to the interpreter, others (such as autochthony, or in this case, the significance of sacrificial death, half-lives and reincarnation) may not be familiar, and yet may be consciously a part of the mythic world of the composers of the myth. Again, future study should pay careful attention to Levi-Strauss' technique, not only to evaluate it, but also to learn just how this is done. It would have been helpful had Levi-Strauss given more information regarding how this technique is executed.

Given these criticisms of Levi-Strauss, there are points in this second article which give substantial support to his hypothesis. Having determined the structure of the first myth, Levi-Strauss goes on to argue that the structure of the second and third myths are identical, even though the overt content changes (SA II, p. 201-2). Indeed, although he has not applied his formula, he has spelled-out a pattern which structures the contents of all three myths. It happens that my application of the formula fits the pattern which he has spelled-out. This means that Levi-Strauss has shown that in all three myths, the structure consists of two categories, life and death (SA II, pp. 201-2). Within each of these two categories, he shows binary oppositions. This pair of binary oppositions is the structure that governs the content of all three myths. My own application of his formula suggests that in these two articles, Levi-Strauss is right in defining myth as the structure of the contents of a story, and that the structuring of the contents reflects an abstraction, the unconscious structure of the human mind. The difference is that the mythic structure is content, while the unconscious structure of the mind is empty.

Furthermore, Levi-Strauss' analysis of the fourth myth supports two other suggestions that Levi-Strauss has previously made.

1) that myth itself can serve as the context in which individual myths are read and understood, and 2) why the formula is what it is, particularly the inversionary factor, $Fa-1(y)$.

Addressing the fourth myth, Levi-Strauss shows that--like the first three myths--the fourth poses the same fundamental problem, the opposition between an ordinary and extraordinary life (SA II, p. 205). That the fourth myth "tries to solve" (SA II, p. 204) the same problem, manifest in a binary opposition, signals that, as far as subjects and functions are concerned, the myths are related; they confront the same problem. A set of myths, then, can serve as the context by which any myth of a group may be understood when they address the same fundamental problem manifest in a binary opposition. Unlike the first three myths, the fourth myth "solves" the original problem by introducing a new pair of opposites as a replacement for the fundamental opposition (SA II, p. 205). The mythemes of this pair exercise different functions coupled with different conditions than the pair of opposites of the first three myths. The mythemes of the fourth myth's secondary opposition are not present in the first three myths, and represent permutations of combinations of subjects and functions that are present in the first myth, which therefore serves as a context for understanding the second structure. For example, the mytheme for the Girl in the fourth myth is $Fx(b)$, meaning that the Girl, living a cultural life, dies a natural death. The term $Fx(b)$ of the mythic structure of the fourth myth represents $Fy(a)$ of the mythic structure of the first three

myths. The term $Fy(a)$, however, is non-existent, or hypothetical. The subject-value (a) exists, and the function-value " y " exists, however, this combination is not manifest in the first structure (myths 1,2,3), only the second (myth 4). Likewise, what is $Fa-1(y)$ for the second structure is $Fb-1(x)$ for the first structure. Hence, the second structure transforms the first in that the terms of the second are permutations of the terms of the first.

Because of Levi-Struass' not unoccasional lack of lucidity, it is difficult to determine whether Levi-Strauss is functioning as an empiricist and a rationalist, or merely as a rationalist. His formula seems a brilliant description of the data as he spells it out. Indeed, if he is reporting the data accurately, and if the data he does not show do not contradict his hypothesis, the formula $Fx(a) : Fy(b) :: Fx(b) : Fa-1(y)$ describes the myths he interprets. If this is so, then it logically follows that as the mind perceives and articulates reality--that is, as the mind imposes binary oppositions on data--it resolves the conflict not merely by exchanging subject and function values, but the mind imposes an additional inversion in one mytheme of the second pair of opposites. What might be $Fy(a)$ becomes not $Fa(y)$, rather $Fa-1(y)$.

The logical conclusion is that there are two ways in which a myth may resolve a fundamental conflict in a secondary opposition. One will reflect a realistic social structure (SA II, p. 204), and can be represented by the terms $Fx(b)$ and $Fa-1(y)$. The second would represent an inversion of the social structure. This resolution would be represented by a permutation of the above terms, resulting in the

terms $Fy(a)$ and $Fb-1(x)$. Therefore, one important implication which rationally follows is that for every problem, there will be two mythic resolutions, or, two types of story.

The most difficult question to answer is, "Is Levi-Strauss right?" Does his formula accurately describe the structure of the contents of myth? Does he really uncover a perception pattern of the human mind--an unconscious structure? The answer I propose is a tentative and qualified "yes." The answer is "yes" because, although he has given no help in the application of his formula, my own application suggests that the interpretation he does spell out is both rational and consistent with the formula. The formula accurately describes the interpretation he puts forth. The answer is "yes" because his hypothesis describes what little empirical data he provides. However, the answer is tentative and qualified because a thesis of this all-encompassing magnitude cannot finally be tested and validated in the analysis of a mere six myths. Future analyses of Levi-Strauss' studies in myth, kinship and totemism, plus an application of this method to other compositions of the human mind are clearly warranted.

Chapter 4

APPLICATION OF LEVI-STRAUSS' METHOD

The Parable of the SowerText

The text of the Parable of the Sower that I shall use for an application of Levi-Strauss' method is that reconstructed by Theodore J. Weeden.¹ As a defense of Weeden's reconstruction is not offered here, his article may be consulted, should the reader be interested in Weeden's argument and debate with J. D. Crossan. My translation of his text is as follows:

Behold, a sower went out to sow.
And as he sowed,
 Some seed fell by the way
 and the birds came
 and devoured it.
And other fell on the rocky place,
 and when the sun arose
 it was scorched.
And other fell among the thorns
 and the thorns came up
 and choked it.
And others fell into the good earth
 and gave fruit
 and bore
 thirtyfold
 and sixtyfold
 and a hundredfold.

¹Weeden, "Parable of the Sower."

Interpretation

Having read the story, the second step is to list any data (for Levi-Strauss, this is ethnographic data) necessary for understanding conscious processes involved in the overt plot of the story, in order that orders, levels and categories in which binary oppositions may be sought can be identified. Unlike the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage, the categories for both binary oppositions and the mythemes are present in the overt plot. Hence, the story itself provides sufficient data for an application of Levi-Strauss' method.

The third step, then, is to identify orders, levels and categories in which binary oppositions may be sought. Two orders are easily identified. One is on the level of actants upon the seed, the sower on one hand, and the birds, sun and thorns on the other. The other order is on the level of seed; two types are represented in the story--seed that is arrested in the growing process, and seed that grows.

The fourth step is to reduce the story to its shortest possible sentences, writing each sentence on a card, followed by the fifth step, which is the arranging of cards into columns within the categories of binary opposition found in step three. Cards of the same column should show similar subject-function relations. Each column will constitute a mytheme. The result will be the following arrangement:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Sower sows
seed | 2) seed falls
on path |
| 3) birds devour
seed | 4) seed falls
on rocky
ground |

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5) sun scorches
seed | 6) seed falls
among thorns | |
| 7) thorns
choke
seed | | 8) seed falls on
good soil |
| | | 9) seed gives
fruit |

The sixth step is to analyze the content of the mythemes (columns), making a summary statement with regards to each mytheme. The first mytheme, Column 1, is composed of one sentence, having to do with the sower, who sows the seed. Although this at first would appear a perfectly simple statement, an analysis of Column 2 sheds more light on Column 1; the two are understood as a binary opposition. Column 2 represents three actants which militate against the growth of the seed. Given Levi-Strauss' method of analysis, we may note that the subjects of the three sentences of Column 2 themselves form a binary opposition and resolution. Thorns are on the ground, the sun in the heavens, and the birds mediate between the two in that birds can fly up to the sky or can come down to the ground. Conceptually, birds belong in the middle, between the sun and the earth. In terms that Levi-Strauss himself employs, this order is on the cosmological level;² the birds, sun and thorns function as a symbol of the cosmic order. I would therefore summarize Column 2 as the taking of the life of (some) seed by the cosmic order. In opposition to this mytheme, I would term Column 1 the giving of seed by--what because it is a human

²See Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Story of Asdiwal," SA II, p. 157.

activity, I shall call, for lack of a better term--culture.³ Column 3 represents seed failing to grow, and Column 4, seed that grows and gives fruit. The four mythemes may be summarized as follows:

Column 1 - the giving of seed by culture

Column 2 - the taking of seed by the cosmic order

Column 3 - seed failing to grow

Column 4 - seed growing and giving fruit

The seventh step is to place the columns--or mythemes--into binary oppositions according to categories determined in number three above. Columns 1 and 2 form one binary opposition, and Columns 3 and 4 another.

The eighth step is to determine which mythemes constitute the most severe, and hence fundamental binary opposition. I will suggest that Columns 1 and 2 form the most severe opposition because not only are the functions in binary opposition, but the subjects are as well.

The ninth step is to determine which mythemes will serve as a secondary opposition. Obviously, we are left with Columns 3 and 4. We shall see that this is a good choice and helps us in performing the eighth step because Column 4 will combine with Column 3 to form a binary opposition, but will also serve as a mediating term between Columns 1 and 2.

³Levi-Strauss frequently suggests nature versus culture as a binary opposition. My own suggestion here is similar to what Levi-Strauss frequently suggests, however, applying a method which he himself proposes to Column 2, in terms which he likewise proposes in SA II, p. 157, it is more correct to term Column 2 the Cosmic Order.

The tenth step is to make a preliminary statement regarding the relationships among the mythemes. I would suggest that Column 1 is to Column 2 as Column 4 is to Column 3, or, the giving of seed by culture is to the taking of seed by the cosmic order as the giving of fruit by seed growing is to the failure of some seed to grow.

The eleventh step is to determine within which binary opposition the subject and function values can most easily be determined. Columns 1 and 2 are the obvious answers, as these are the mythemes that we have so far given the most detailed analysis. The subject-value of Column 1 is "culture" and the function-value is "giving." The subject-value of Column 2 is the "cosmic order" and the function-value is "taking."

The twelfth step is to determine which mytheme of the secondary opposition combines the subject-value of one mytheme of the fundamental opposition with the function-value of the other. In Column 4, the function is "giving" fruit, and "giving" is also the function of Column 1. We must therefore ask, does the subject-value of Column 2 fit Column 4? The subject-value of Column 4 is the "cosmic order." This would combine with "giving," resulting in a mytheme, "the giving of the cosmic order," which accurately describes Column 4. We therefore assign $Fx(b)$ to Column 4. We can now assign the other terms of Levi-Strauss' formula. Since the function "x" is "giving," I shall assign $Fx(a)$ to Column 1, "the giving of seed by culture." In this term, "x" is "giving" and (a) is (culture). Column 2 is then assigned to $Fy(b)$. In this term, "y" is "taking" and (b) is (cosmic order). The remaining term is $Fa^{-1}(y)$, which is assigned to Column 3, "seed

failing to grow." The function "y," "taking," is inverted into the subject (y), (taken). The subject-value (a), (culture), is inverted into the function-value "a," "to make culture," then, it is again inverted into its opposite, "a-1," which would be "failure to make culture." $Fa-1(y)$ therefore becomes "the failure to make culture of the taken," an interesting as well as enlightening perception-description of Column 3.

The total mythic structure would appear as follows:

$Fy(b)$ - Birds, Sun, Thorns
(cosmic order) "taking"

$Fa-1(y)$ - Seed falling on "poor"
soil
(taken) "failure to make culture"

$Fx(b)$ - Seed falling on "good"
soil
(cosmic order) "giving"

$Fx(a)$ - Sower
(culture) "giving"

We now have all of the information necessary to perform the final step, the application of Levi-Strauss' formula $Fx(a) : Fy(b) :: Fx(b) : Fa-1(y)$, to make a statement regarding the structure of the myth. It would read as follows: The giving of culture is to the taking of the cosmic order as the giving of the cosmic order is to the failure to make culture of the taken. This structure of the myth serves as a perception pattern by which we can now understand the message and meaning of the parable.

The parable of the sower shows a fundamental binary opposition,

which represents a basic problem or contradiction, that will be created in the imagination of the listener, and which the parable will attempt to resolve. The fundamental problem or conflict is between the Sower on the one hand and the Birds, Sun and Thorns on the other. The Sower represents the culture. The Sower's function in the parable is to give seed in order that the seed might bring forth a harvest so that the culture itself might grow. Opposed to the Sower, and hence, the culture, are elements and events which militate against growth of the seed given by the Sower. There is nothing nefarious or evil about the Birds, Sun and Thorns; they are merely a part of the cosmic order and represent the processes of the cosmos at work. Because of where some of the seed happens to fall, and because the cosmic processes must function in order to sustain life, the cosmic order ends-up taking the life of some of the seed. Some gets taken, some scorched and some choked. This is the fundamental problem of the parable; a relationship of conflict and antagonism between culture and the processes of the cosmic order at work.

This fundamental conflict or problem is replaced by a second binary opposition, which serves to resolve this fundamental conflict. First, there is seed that falls in places not conducive to growth. This seed is taken and therefore symbolizes frustration, an inability or failure for a culture to develop, because of the cosmic processes at work which--even while sustaining life--rub against some of life and consume. Opposed to this seed is seed that falls on soil conducive to growth. This seed combines qualities of both the Sower and the Birds, Sun and Thorns: like the Birds, Sun and Thorns, the seed is a part

of the cosmic order; but like the Sower, this seed gives more seed; it increases thirty, sixty and a hundred times.

The message of the parable, then is a message of hope. As parable, however, it does not predicate hope; as narrative it resolves a perceived conflict between the activities of culture and the cosmos in a way that says, "Because of the cosmic processes at work, some seed will get taken, scorched, choked, and the work of culture will at times be frustrated. Nevertheless, if you will just look at the way things are, you will see that in spite of these frustrations, some seed falls on the good soil, and from that seed, there is a harvest." This message becomes a mode of pensiveness and self-understanding by which the listener can now reflect on life in the world.

The Woman with the Hemorrhage

Text

The text that I shall use for an analysis is Mark 5:24b-34 (RSV):

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well." And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my garments?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Interpretation

Having read the story, the second step is to gather any data necessary for understanding conscious processes involved in the overt plot of the story. For the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage, it is important to know the law appertaining to a woman with a hemorrhage in Leviticus 15:25-31. A woman with a hemorrhage is regarded as unclean, and therefore taboo.⁴ Anything or anyone she touches shall become unclean as well. An unclean person is therefore denied contact with the people of Israel, and is not allowed near the tabernacle, lest it be defiled as well.

The third step is to identify orders, levels and categories in which binary oppositions may be sought. Two categories are readily identifiable. The first is on the social level, and embodies the conflict between the holy and the unclean. The woman is unclean, and therefore automatically opposes all that the law and teaching in the Pentateuch stand for, the holy. Collectively the laws and teachings of the Pentateuch symbolize the Kingdom of God, the sacred order of things. I will therefore suggest that one opposition, within the category of social order, consists of a binary opposition between the

⁴ Edmund Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse," first published in Eric H. Lenneberg, New Directions in the Study of Language (1964), reprinted in William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (eds.) Reader in Comparative Religion, 4th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 157. Leach employs Levi-Strauss' method in order to explain why human excretion is structurally regarded as taboo. If indeed the unconscious mind divides into binary oppositions, human excretion would be regarded as taboo because it is perceived as belonging neither in the body nor in the world.

Kingdom of God and the Woman. We should note that the Kingdom of God is not present in the overt plot of the story, but its presence--for reasons which Levi-Strauss' thesis furnishes, namely that the mind "thinks" in binary opposition--is felt. It is what gives the story its power.

The second order in which a binary opposition may be found is the level of healers. There are two types of healer in this story, the Physicians and Jesus. In fact, they have a type of inverse relationship to each other: the Physicians are conventional healers whose actions result, not in the amelioration of the woman, rather, in the worsening of her condition. Jesus, on the other hand, is not a healer in the same (professional) sense as the Physicians. Nevertheless, his action results in the Woman's healing. This relationship may be represented as follows:

conventional healer		amelioration
Physicians	+	-
Jesus	-	+

The fourth step is to reduce the story to the shortest possible sentences, writing each sentence on a card. This is then followed by the fifth step, which is to arrange the cards into columns. Having identified orders and binary oppositions in step three, I will suggest the following arrangement in accordance with the suggested binary oppositions:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Woman--flow
of blood | 2) Physicians inflict
greater suffering
on the woman, tak-
ing her money,
worsening her
condition |
| 3) Woman comes up
behind Jesus and
touches his
garments | 4) Power goes forth
from Jesus as he
is touched; hem-
orrhage ceases |
| 6) Woman comes in
fear and tremb-
ling and tells
the whole truth | 5) Jesus asks, "Who
touched me?"

7) Jesus tells her
to go in peace and
be healed |

The sixth step is to analyze the content of the mythemes (columns), making a summary statement with regards to each mytheme. Column 1 represents the Woman, who is unclean. She sneaks up behind Jesus and touches his garments. From her reaction (and from Jesus'), we can see that this is not merely touching, however; she is taking Jesus' healing power. I would therefore suggest that Column 1 is "the unclean taking." Column 2 obviously has to do with "the worsening of the Woman's condition for self-benefit. Column 3 has to do with giving what has just been taken; namely healing. But this is not all. Jesus has been touched by the Woman, and so, he has been rendered unclean. I would therefore suggest that this column represents "the unclean giving." Not represented in the overt content of the story is the Kingdom of God, which is also in binary opposition to the Woman. Since the mytheme representing the Woman represents "the unclean taking," I will suggest that the Kingdom of God, in

opposition to the Woman, may be termed "the holy giving." The four mythemes are summarized as follows:

Column 1 - the taking of the unclean

Column 2 - the worsening of the condition of another for self-benefit

Column 3 - the unclean giving

Column not represented - the holy giving

The seventh step is to place the columns--or mythemes--into binary opposition according to categories determined in number three above. The column not represented is opposed to Column 1 and Column 3 is opposed to Column 2.

The eighth step is to determine which mythemes constitute the most severe, and hence fundamental binary opposition. I would suggest that the Column not represented and Column 1 form the most severe binary opposition, for two reasons: 1) they are of oppositesubject and function ("giving" versus "taking" and "holy" versus "unclean") and 2) the opposition between the Kingdom as sacred order and the Woman is the fundamental problem that the story attempts to resolve.

The ninth step is to determine which mythemes will serve as a secondary opposition. We are, of course, left with Columns 3 and 2. We can readily see that this will be a good choice for the additional reasons that 1) Jesus' subject-function combination mediates between the Kingdom of God and the Woman, and 2) the opposition between Jesus and the Physicians mythically replaces the fundamental opposition (between the Kingdom and the Woman).

The tenth step is to make a preliminary statement regarding the relationships among the mythemes. I would suggest that the Column

not represented is to Column 1 as Column 3 is to Column 2, or, the giving of the holy is to the taking of the unclean as the giving of the unclean is to the worsening of another's condition for self-benefit.

The eleventh step is to determine within which binary opposition the subject and function values can most easily be determined. The Column not represented and Column 1 are both readily apparent. The subject-value of the Kindgom is "holy" and the function is "giving," as opposed to the Woman, where the subject-value is "unclean" and the function is "taking."

The twelfth step is to determine which mytheme of the secondary opposition combines the subject-value of one mytheme of the fundamental opposition with the function-value of the other. The obvious choice is Column 3, which combines the subject-value, "unclean," of Column 1 with the function-value, "giving," of the Column not represented. We therefore assign $Fx(b)$ to Column 3. We are now in the position to assign the remaining terms of Levi-Strauss' formula. If $Fx(b)$ represents the function "x" as giving and the subject (b) as (unclean), the $Fx(a)$ is assigned to the Column not represented, the Kingdom of God, where the function "x" is "giving" and the subject (a) is (holy). $Fx(a)$ is "the giving of the holy." $Fy(b)$, on the other hand, is assigned to Column 1, the Woman, where the function "y" is "taking" and the subject (b) is (unclean). That leaves us with the term $Fa-1(y)$, which is assigned to the Physicians. We already know "y" as a function, "taking." Inverted to subject-value, it either becomes "taker" or "taken," both of which describe the Physicians, the latter of which

(as we shall see) may provide significant insight into how the physicians are perceived by the listener. Turning to the function "a-1," we already know (a) as the subject (holy). Its opposite (a-1) would therefore be (unholy). Inverted to function-value, it becomes "to prevent holiness." The result is the unit-term $Fa-1(y)$, which means "the taken preventing holiness," which describes the Physicians as worsening the Woman's condition and taking her money because they are taken with her.

The total mythic structure would appear as follows;

$Fy(b)$ - Woman
(unclean) taking

$Fa-1(y)$ - Physicians
(taken) preventing holiness

$Fx(b)$ - Jesus
(unclean) giving

$Fx(a)$ - Kingdom of God
(holy) giving

We now have all of the information necessary to perform the final step, the application of Levi-Strauss' formula $Fx(a) : Fy(b) :: Fx(b) : Fa-1(y)$, and make a statement regarding the mythic structure of the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage: The Kingdom of God is to the Woman with the Hemorrhage as Jesus is to the Physicians, or, the giving of the holy is to the taking of the unclean as the giving of the unclean is to the prevention of holiness of the taken. This is the mythic perception pattern by which we can now understand the story's message and meaning.

The story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage finds its basic meaning in a fundamental problem, the conflict between the Kingdom of God, symbolized by sacred order as set forth in the Pentateuch on the one hand, and the Woman on the other, who, because of her condition, violates sacred order. Conceptually speaking, the Kingdom is holy, a category for describing and labeling the Kingdom with which any person who knew the teaching and law of the Pentateuch would be familiar. Opposed to the Kingdom is the Woman who is unclean, and therefore, taboo, having no meaningful place within the sacred order, resulting in her having been ostracized from the social order. Because of her condition and her exclusion from the community, the Woman finds herself reaching out, trying to grab hold of Jesus' healing power. Unlike the Kingdom, which is perceived in the story as the giving of the holy, the Woman is perceived as the taking of the unclean.

This fundamental problem, the basis for conflict in the story, is replaced and resolved by a second opposition between two types of healer. On one hand, there are the Physicians. Taken by the Woman's condition, they resolve--not to heal her, not to better her condition, rather--to take her for all she is worth, worsening her condition, and hence sharply diminishing her chances for re-entry into the social order and participation in sacred order. Opposed to the Physicians is Jesus, who not only heals her, but also mythically and perceptually resolves the fundamental conflict between the Kingdom and the Woman because he combines characteristics of each of these two mythemes. Because the Woman reaches out and touches him, Jesus becomes unclean. He therefore has the right to be angry; this is signaled by the

response of the Woman, who "came in fear and trembling and fell down before him." However, his response is not to chastize the Woman for rendering him unclean, rather, to transform what she has just taken, making it into a gracious gift, with his blessing.

Thus far, I have applied Levi-Strauss' method in his terms as much as possible. My next and final task in this project is to draw some hermeneutical conclusions, and hence, more extensive interpretation of the two stories. However, strictly speaking, an application of the technique Levi-Strauss suggests in his two articles ends with the above analysis. The final chapter is motivated by a personal interest, the re-telling of these stories and the mythic structure's importance for preaching in the church.

Chapter 5

HERMENEUTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

A Hermeneutical Proposal: The Transformation
of Imagination

At the outset of this project, the question was raised concerning how we discover meaning in Biblical narrative. Then, given that we can discover a story's meaning, how is meaning translated into community, so that the meaning of a story embraces both the community's ritual and behavior patterns?

Levi-Strauss' hypothesis is twofold: 1) The mind organizes data into categories. 2) Within categories, the mind divides data into binary oppositions, resolving the oppositions by mediation. His method is intended to show how the mind divides the events, dramatis personae and other contents of the myth into categories, and how the unconscious mind organizes these events and characters into binary oppositions. This organization, an unconscious mechanism of thinking, reflects "not how men think in myths, but how myths operate in men's minds without their being aware of the fact" (RAC, p. 12).

Levi-Strauss has spelled out a method for discovering conscious categories that the listener would likely identify, and how those categories are then organized by the human mind. It is worth noting that this method is not intended to undermine the historical-critical method presently employed by Biblical scholars. Indeed, future applications of Levi-Strauss' technique rest heavily on the historical-critical method, particularly the history of religions.

The reason for this is that in studying the Bible, we are addressing texts that are very old. And since the application of this method presupposes that the mind organizes into categories, levels and orders, the modern structuralist exegete must be able to identify the orders represented in a text. But because of the vast number of years of history that separate the interpreter from the people that have composed the text, the conscious categories in which modern communities imaginatively and sociologically function have changed. For example, in the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage, it is assumed that a woman with a hemorrhage is taboo. Today, this is no longer so. Therefore, any information that a structuralist exegete can gain from the historian of religions with regards to conscious categories operative in the mind of the composers of a text is a welcome component. The structuralist method in no way supplants work done by traditional exegetes and historians of religion. On the contrary, without their data, the structuralist is in the dark. This is clearly illustrated in Levi-Strauss' analysis of the "Four Winnebago Myths" when, having given a synopsis of the myth, Levi-Strauss' first task is to provide relevant ethnographic data which Levi-Strauss also gets from Radin, which enable Levi-Strauss, the interpreter, to understand conscious processes and categories that the composers would bring to the shaping of the myth.

However, in addition to depending on data which comes to the Biblical exegete through the history of religions and other methods and criticisms employed in the field of scholarly Biblical studies, the structuralist method clearly moves in a new direction, addressing the questions of both unconscious patterns which shape the myth and

which are manifest in the invariant structure of the contents of the myth, and at the same time, how the myth will operate in the mind of the listeners, even "without their being aware of the fact" (RAC, p. 12). In Chapter 4, I applied Levi-Strauss' method to two Bible stories, in an effort to bring to surface the structure of the contents of the story. I now turn to the question of how the Bible story operates in the listener's mind, in an effort to aid the preacher in both bringing the structure of a Bible story to surface, and in better understanding one way in which a Bible story may transform a community.

Clearly, Levi-Strauss' hypothesis and method are circular, for if indeed there is an unconscious structure of the human mind that imposes form on the contents of all reality, then this unconscious structure will both give shape to a story and be manifest in its structure. Then, as the story is told, we would likewise logically expect the conscious mind of the listener to identify categories, levels and orders represented in the story, while at the same time the unconscious mind organizes the content into binary oppositions and resolutions. It logically follows, then, that when we discover the structure of the contents of the story, we discover the way in which the story operates in the listener's mind. In Levi-Strauss' prolegomenon, he suggested an algebraic formula (SA, p. 228) to describe this structure, which I successfully applied not only to the structure of the "Four Winnebago Myths" as he interpreted them, but which also worked and helped us to understand the structure of the content of the two Bible stories to which I have applied Levi-Strauss' method. In my critique of Levi-Strauss (Chapter 3), I posed the question

as to why the formula includes the term $Fa-1(y)$ instead of $Fy(a)$. The tentative conclusion is that within the total formula, this term best describes the structure of the myths Levi-Strauss has analyzed, and ultimately, an unconscious structure of the human mind. I now suggest that the logical implications dictated by this formula provide at least one important clue in attempting to answer the question as to how human communities can be transformed by Bible stories such as those analyzed in Chapter 4. The formula implies that for every perceived problem or conflict addressed by a story, the story can logically resolve the problem in one of two ways, socially realistic or socially absurd. If a socially realistic resolution is represented by the assignment of $Fx(a)$ to mytheme 1 of a story and $Fy(b)$ to mytheme 2, then a socially absurd resolution will be represented by the assigning of $Fx(a)$ to mytheme 2 and $Fy(b)$ to mytheme 1. It therefore follows that once we know the mythic structure of a story and have assigned Levi-Strauss' formula, we can then invert the assignment of the terms $Fx(a)$ and $Fy(b)$ to their opposite mythemes in order logically to determine an inverse resolution to a perceived problem. If a mythic structure represents a socially realistic resolution, using Levi-Strauss' formula, we can determine an inverse structure, a socially absurd structure, as well. If, on the other hand, the mythic structure of a story is socially absurd, by inverting the assignments of $Fx(a)$ and $Fy(b)$, we can also determine what a socially realistic mythic structure and resolution would look like.

By determining the mythic structure which represents an inversion of the mythic structure of a story, I now suggest that the

inverted mythic structure represents the mode of imaginative conflict resolution that the mythic structure of the story challenges and transforms by offering a new resolution to the perceived problem or conflict. How would this work? In abstract terms, we might suppose that members of a community perceive a conflict between A and B, and imaginatively understand the resolution to the conflict as represented by a secondary binary opposition between C and D, with C as the mediating term. The mythic structure would be represented as follows:

$Fy(b) - B$

$Fa-1(y) - D$

$Fx(b) - C$ (mediating term)

$Fx(a) - A$

Then suppose that a preacher preaches a Bible story represented by the following structure:

$Fy(b) - A$

$Fa-1(y) - C_2$

$Fx(b) - D_2$ (mediating term)

$Fx(a) - B$

Here, the subject-matter of the story is the same problem or conflict, but the story, instead of resolving the conflict by the mythemes C and D, with C as mediating term, resolves the conflict by the mythemes D_2 and C_2 , with D_2 as the mediating term. As the preacher preaches the story, the story--because its contents embody an inversion of the

imaginative way in which a community presently resolves a conflict--challenges the mythic structure operant in the community's imagination with a new mythic structure. The story's mythic structure informs the imagination by provoking a new way of understanding how the community might live in the world, pattern life together and resolve the problems and conflicts that antagonize life.¹

Two implications follow this proposal. First, using Levi-Strauss' method and formula, the preacher--in addition to determining the mythic structure of a story--can determine the inverse structure of the story, and consequently, the mythic pattern that the Bible story challenges and transforms. Not only can the preacher bring to consciousness the inverse mythic pattern and resulting self-understanding, the preacher can then re-tell and preach the Bible story in such a way that he or she brings to surface and accents the mythic structure of the story, so that the community's self-understanding and imagination can be clearly and poignantly challenged and transformed.

Secondly, although the interpreter might not be able to determine historical fact with respect to stories from the Bible that are read and preached, the Biblical interpreter, employing Levi-Strauss' technique in the analysis of a sufficient number of texts, may at least be able to determine whether the story, within the context of the

¹This may very well represent what Levi-Strauss means when he writes that "the myth and the musical work are like conductors of an orchestra, whose audience becomes the silent performers" (RAC, p. 17).

times it represents, is socially realistic or absurd. This is important because it may very well be that two different Bible stories might address the same problem, and yet one story is a transformation of the other in that one reflects a social structure that is socially realistic and the other socially absurd. Not only would this enable the preacher to preach a Bible story with greater acumen, but this being the case, future studies might very well alleviate at least some of the problem with respect to the meaning of demons and other subjects which continue to confuse the reader.

In order that this proposal might be validated and refined, future studies in Levi-Strauss' books and articles are needed in at least two areas: 1) His formula should be tested not only against other myths which he interprets, but also against other stories, which may include stories from the Bible. 2) His hypothesis regarding binary opposition and resolution as a primary unconscious mechanism in human thinking should be tested as well.

My final task in this project is to test this hermeneutical proposal with regards to imaginative transformation on the Parable of the Sower and the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage.

The Hermeneutical Proposal Applied

The Parable of the Sower

In Chapter 4, using Levi-Strauss' method and formula, I proposed a mythic structure, which represents the way in which the parable would be perceived and understood by the listener. The mythic

structure was represented as follows:

Fy(b) - Birds, Sun, Thorns
(cosmic order) taking

Fa-1(y) - Seed falling of "poor"
soil
(taken) failure to make culture

Fx(b) - Seed falling on "good"
soil
(cosmic order) giving

Fx(a) - Sower
(culture) giving

By inverting the mythic structure and assigning Fx(a) to the Birds, Sun and Thorns and Fy(b) to the Sower, we can obtain a representation of the mythic structure that the Parable of the Sower transforms. The function "x" of the Birds, Sun and Thorns becomes "taking" and the subject (a), (cosmic order). The function "y" of the Sower becomes "giving" and the subject (b), culture. We can now work-out the other two terms of the formula: Fx(b) becomes "the taking of culture" and Fa-1(y), "the failure of the cosmic order to grow." This structure may be represented as follows:

Fy(b) - Sower
(culture) giving

Fa-1(y) - Cosmic Order
(given) failing to develop

Fx(b) - Culture
(culture) taking

Fx(a) - Birds, Sun Thorns
(cosmic order) taking

Here, I have introduced a new opposition, between Culture and Cosmic Order within the first opposition, between the Birds, Sun and Thorns and the Sower. As with the structure represented by the Parable of the Sower, in this structure we have a fundamental binary opposition between the Sower who gives seed in order that a harvest might be produced, and elements of the Cosmic Order (Birds, Sun and Thorns) who militate against growth of the seed. This opposition is replaced by a new opposition, between Culture and the Cosmic Order. This time, however, additional elements of the culture--that is, in addition to the Sower--also militate against growth of the seed, but more severely. They take the seed. This could result in the failure of any seed given by the Sower to grow. Using Levi-Strauss' formula, we would say that the taking of the cosmic order is to the giving of culture as the taking of culture is to the failure of the cosmic order to develop. It suggests that unlike the Parable of the Sower, in addition to elements of the cosmic order, which militate against the seed, members of the culture take the life of seed as well, arresting its growth and supplanting a potential harvest. A parable shaped by this mythic structure might look like this:

A sower went out to sow.
 And as he sowed,
 Some seed fell by the way
 and birds came
 and devoured it.
 And other seed fell on the rocky place
 And when the sun arose
 it was scorched.
 And other seed fell among the thorns
 and the thorns came up
 and choked it.
 And other seed fell on good earth
 and began to grow

but people trampled it underfoot.
And so, the seed failed to grow.

Unlike the Parable of the Sower, this story and its mythic structure reflect an understanding of reality that, for lack of better terms, I would judge as hopeless and absurd. This story and perception of the world reflect a radically different resolution to the same problem addressed by the Parable of the Sower, namely, how does one reconcile two forces, neither of which are perceived as evil, and yet which rub against each other? How is this conflict to be understood? How is it resolved? What perception is to inform the imagination in order that the listener might react in an appropriate and meaningful way to similar conflicts as the listener goes about the task of living? How are we to order life together? This story embodies no hope. It is tragic. It is one thing for the processes with which culture tries to cooperate in order to create life, out of no evil intention, to aggravate growth. But in this story, not only is the total cosmos perceived as militant towards growth, the culture is perceived that way as well. I am not trying to suggest that the Parable of the Sower predicates naive optimism, but its inversion reflects not only pessimism, but cynical pessimism at best. A community with this type of self-understanding would have no hope for a meaningful life together in the world whatsoever. Indeed, the outlook of this story on reality is absurd.

However, this inversion of the mythic structure of the Parable of the Sower not only reflects the very understanding of reality that the Parable itself challenges and transforms, it serves as a context

which the preacher can articulate and into which the preacher can then cast the parable in order that the parable might have its transforming, and hence parabolic effect upon the imagination. The representative conflict between the Birds, Sun, Thorns and the Sower can be spelled-out, along with the absurdity of a hopeless mediation by a culture that functions not in the manner of the Sower, but in the manner of the elements of the cosmic order which militate against growth of the seed.

Having brought this structure, self-understanding and outlook to the level of consciousness, the preacher can then tell the parable itself. With knowledge of the parable's mythic structure and way in which the mind of the listener will organize the mythemes of the parable, the preacher can accent the mythic structure of the parable as it is preached in such a way as will directly challenge the hopeless absurd outlook and self-understanding reflected by the parable's inversion. A re-telling of the Parable of the Sower might look something like this:

"A sower went out to sow. As he sows, seed falls in different places: Some seed falls by the way, some on rocky ground and some among thorns."

"Opposed to the activity of the sower, which is to give seed in order that a harvest might grow, are activities which militate against the growth of the seed.

"First are the birds. There is nothing evil about birds; they are just those lovely creatures of the air that everybody loves and adores. But just look at those birds--how they gobble-up that seed! The birds devour the seed that happens to fall by the way."

"Second is the sun. Like the birds, there is nothing evil about the sun. As a matter of fact, without the sun, there will be no growth! But because of where some of the seed happens to fall on this particular day--on rocky ground--this seed gets scorched.'

"And third are the thorns. Thorns are a little stickier than the birds and sun, and so, more of a problem for us humans. But they do serve a function: they enable the plant on which they grow to protect itself. So this seed, because of where it just happens to fall, gets choked.

"Now before leaving the birds, sun and thorns, we should note that collectively, they symbolize the entire cosmic order. The thorns are on the ground, the sun is up in the heavens and the birds are in-between--they can come down to the ground or fly up to the heavens. Taken together, they form a symbol of the entire world. And so, what Jesus is saying is that, not because of any reason of intended evil, but because of the life-sustaining processes that are at work in the world, the world itself has a way of rubbing against life; some seed gets gobbled-up, some scorched and some choked. And that's the way things are in the world.

"But just look at the harvest! Because of a kernel of life that is a part of the cosmos, the world order, in spite of the events which rub against life and militate against growth of the seed, there is a harvest. Some seed falls on good soil, and it grows and increases, yielding thirty, sixty and one hundred times of what was sown by the sower."

The Woman with the Hemorrhage

Applying Levi-Strauss' method to the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage, in Chapter 4, I obtained results which are represented by the following mythic structure:

Fy(b) - Woman
(unclean) taking

Fa-1(y) - Physicians
(taken) preventing holiness

Fx(b) - Jesus
(unclean) giving

Fx(a) - Kingdom of God
(holy) giving

Proceeding with the present hermeneutical proposal, our task is to obtain the mythic pattern which the story challenges and transforms. This is done by inverting the assignment of the terms Fx(a) and Fy(b) to their respective mythemes and then carrying the formula to its logical conclusion. Fx(a) is assigned to the Woman. The function "x" becomes "taking" and the subject (a) is (unclean). Fy(b) is assigned to the Kingdom of God, where the function "y" is "giving" and the subject (b) is (holy). The term Fx(b) combines the function "taking" with the subject (holy). The term Fa-1(y) is slightly more difficult. The subject (y) is the inversion of the function "y," and becomes "given," referring to "given by the Kingdom of God." The function "a-1" may be obtained by taking first the opposite of the subject (a), where (unclean) becomes (clean). Then, inverted to function-value, (clean) becomes "to cleanse." Fa-1(y) is therefore

"the cleansing of the given." If we assign the Physicians to $Fx(b)$ and Jesus to $Fa-1(y)$, the result is the following mythic structure:

$Fy(b)$ - Kingdom of God
(holy) giving

$Fa-1(y)$ - Jesus
(given) cleansing

$Fx(b)$ - Physicians
(holy) taking

$Fx(a)$ - Woman
(unclean) taking

This mythic structure is radically different from the mythic structure of the story. The differences obviously have to do with the introduction of a secondary binary opposition to replace the first. In this resolution, two differences are easily noted. The task of the preacher would be to decipher and to spell-out what these differences mean. The first difference is with Jesus. In this second mythic structure, he is represented as cleansing and as given. We might suggest that he is given by the Kingdom of God for the purpose of cleansing. We should note, in addition, that the Jesus of the second mythic structure, unlike the Jesus of the mythic structure of the story, is not unclean. The question should be asked as to why, and the answer can be crucial in interpreting and preaching the text: the Jesus of the second mythic structure is not represented as having had contact with the Woman. Two important implications logically follow: 1) within this mythic structure, we may not be certain that it represents Jesus as healing the Woman, however, 2) if indeed Jesus

does heal the Woman, he is represented here as healing her as an act of unilateral power in which Jesus the healer is not vulnerable to the Woman's condition. The first of these might baffle the interpreter until the Jesus of this inverse mythic structure is juxtaposed and compared to the Physicians of the same structure, which is the second major difference to note. The Physicians here are particularly anomalous, because they combine the subject-value of the Kingdom of God, (holy), with the function-value of its opposite, "taking." The strange and absurd character of the Physicians would therefore result from the fact that they are holy subjects performing unholy acts. The question then raised is, "How could this be so?" The answer explains the absurdity of the whole inverse mythic structure: The holiness of the Physicians may be accounted for by Jesus' healing not the Woman, but the Physicians themselves. Their healing might come through Jesus' forgiving them for what they have done and declaring them holy. This could explain the "why" with regards to why this mythic structure does not necessarily imply the healing of the Woman.

This information may be combined to give a mythic structure which represents the resolution to a problem, an understanding of Jesus and a self-understanding that the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage directly challenges and transforms. The problem addressed is the same, the conflict between the Kingdom of God, symbolized by sacred order as set forth in the Pentateuch on the one hand, and the Woman with the Hemorrhage on the other. The resolution to the problem, however, is radically different. As in the first structure,

the Physicians take the Woman, but here, it is they who are declared holy and forgiven for what they have done, not the Woman. The absurdity of this story is twofold: 1) The Physicians, instead of the Woman, receive Jesus' healing through forgiveness. The result is that the original conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Woman is imaginatively resolved, but not in a way that is either sociologically plausible or satisfying to the listener. Indeed, the original conflict remains a conflict, for this inverse structure merely forgives perverse acts of the status quo at the expense of the Woman who remains ostracized from the community. 2) The Jesus of this mythic structure heals or forgives as an act of unilateral power, which not only maintains and supports the status quo, hence preventing a satisfying resolution to the original problem, but which is also done at no expense to Jesus. Unlike the Jesus of the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage, the Jesus of the inverse mythic structure is not vulnerable to the world. He is a Jesus of strength and power. What is more, it is the Physicians, not Jesus, who function as mediators, and hence messiahs, in this second mythic structure. The Physicians mediate because they combine the subject-value of the Kingdom with the function-value of the Woman. In the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage, the opposite is true: Jesus is the mediator, combining the opposite features of the fundamental opposition. In the second mythic structure, the Physicians function as messiahs because in spite of their perverse action, they are declared holy. In the first mythic structure, Jesus functions as messiah, and the original sociological problem is resolved: the Woman is cleansed (even at the

expense of the healer) and (by implication) re-integrated into the community.

The inverse mythic structure of the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage serves as a context into which the story itself may be told and preached, however, when compared with the Parable of the Sower, this works in a slightly different way. Where the Parable of the Sower is a story told by Jesus, the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage is a story told about Jesus. And since the point of inversion in the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage comes at the point where Jesus transforms what the Woman has taken into a gracious gift,² the inverse mythic structure might better work as a point of comparsion. This would prove especially helpful when--having retold the story--the preacher addresses the Christology embodied in the mythic structure.

How might this work? The preacher's first task would be to re-tell the story as a part of the sermon, bringing to surface and accenting its mythic structure as much as possible. An example of a re-telling might be as follows:

"As Jesus was walking with his disciples to the home of Jairus, the synagogue ruler, a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. In the crowd, was a Woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. Of course, this is a terrible length of time to have a hemorrhage, and

²Burton Mack, in an unpublished paper, "Ritual Killing and the Lord's Supper According to Paul," employing methods used in the phenomenology and history of religions, has seen this same transformation of being taken into a gracious gift in the supper tradition in Paul.

it caused her severe pain and discomfort. But worse than the discomfort is the fact that because of her physical condition, she was ostracized from the community; isolated from contact with any person; We turn to the 15th Chapter of Leviticus to discover that a woman with a hemorrhage is unclean. When the Bible says a person is unclean, it means that the person is ceremonially impure. People who were unclean were kept separate for their uncleanness, particularly from the tabernacle, the central place of worship, lest it be defiled and all contact between the Lord and Israel be defiled as well. So, not only would the Woman's physical condition cause her great pain and suffering, it would result in her being ostracized from the community and cut-off from any established form of worship.

"In addition to being an outcast, she had gone to several Physicians, hoping to be healed of her sickness. The Physicians, however, offered her no healing. Instead, taken by the prospect of exploiting the Woman, they took all of her money and made her condition worse instead of better.

"She has heard reports about Jesus, about his teaching with authority, but more important to her, about his healing. Having heard the things Jesus had done, she thinks to herself, 'If I can touch even his garments, I shall be made well.'

"She is in this crowd that is pressing upon Jesus, and sneaking up behind him, she reaches out and grabs his garment. Immediately the hemorrhage ceases, and she feels in her body that she is healed of her disease.

"Jesus perceives in himself that power has gone forth from him,

and immediately turns about in the crowd and says, 'Who touched my garments?' His disciples can't imagine what he is talking about and reply, 'You see this crowd pressing about you. How can you say, "Who touched me?"' Jesus ignores them. He looks at the crowd to see who has done it.

"The Woman knows what she has done. She is unclean. She has sneaked up behind Jesus, reached out, grabbed him, and rendered him unclean. She has taken his healing power without asking for it. And she's caught! And she's scared! So, she comes forth in fear and trembling, falls down before him and tells him the whole truth: how she had been sick for so many years; how the Physicians had inflicted even greater misery on her, taking all of her money; the agony of being cut-off from God; the agony of being cut-off from contact with any human being; and then, how she had heard about Jesus; how she had hoped he could heal her; how she had thought to herself, 'If I could just touch him, I shall be made well;' how she had sneaked-up behind him in the crowd, seeking to take his healing power for herself, reaching out, grabbing him, making him unclean, making him bear her sickness upon himself. She told him everything. She told him the whole truth.

"Jesus speaks to her; he calls her 'Daughter.' 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'"

Having re-told the story, the preacher might then address the Christology integral to the story by comparing the story's Christology with the Christology represented by the inverse structure. In the inverse structure, Jesus is a strong and powerful Jesus, protected

from vulnerability to what is taboo in the social structure. He resolves not the fundamental sociological conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Woman who is taboo and ostracized, but the problem of the members of the status quo, the Physicians, who--because of the way they order life--have prevented the Woman's re-entering a life of holiness, by forgiving what they have done and declaring them holy, and hence neglecting the fundamental problem. This Jesus fails to function as messiah precisely because he fails to function as mediator in the fundamental conflict. Contrary to this Jesus, the Jesus of the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage functions as messiah because he mediates between the components of the fundamental opposition. Unlike the Physicians of the inverse mythic structure, Jesus the Christ functions on the level of the Kingdom while subject to the Woman who is taboo and ostracized.

The exposition of this type of Christology can then imaginatively inform the community's self-understanding. It implies that if there is to be sociological amelioration, like Jesus, the community is going to be taken and rendered unclean. Healing is accomplished at the expense of the healer. There is no unilateral power by which the community will solve its problem. However, since there is no unilateral power available, the community is free to become just that--a community. The community is free to become coherent. Since there is no unilateral power available, the community is imaginatively freed from the anxiety that results from the false need to obtain power and the suspicion between members of the community that so commonly tears people apart. The people of the community are free to give their

lives to each other and readied to re-integrate the taboo and the ostracized back into the acceptable social structure. Indeed, it is this self-understanding and re-integration into the community that is healing to the outcast. The Christology integral to the story, then, becomes the provoking of a self-understanding that informs the manner in which the community patterns its life together.

The Mythic Structure Superimposed

One further hermeneutical technique is prompted by Levi-Strauss' method, which permits us to combine the structures of the two stories under consideration. In the future, this technique might provide a context and pattern in which other stories can be understood. Levi-Strauss has defined myth in the true sense of the term as the sum-total of all its variants (SA, p. 217). In order to discover the myth suggested by a group of stories, the two-dimensional structures of individual stories belonging to the same group are superimposed.³ In the "Four Winnebago Myths," Levi-Strauss argued that the fourth myth may be grouped with the first three because its mythic structure included the same fundamental opposition as the first three. Upon applying his formula, I discovered this to be true in that although the subjects of the fundamental opposition were different, the functions were the same, and the subject-function combinations were strikingly similar (see above, pp. 30 and 36). Following Levi-Strauss' rationale, I would like to suggest that the

³For an illustration, see SA, p. 218, figure 7.

same be done to the mythic structures of the Parable of the Sower and the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage. Since we are doing this with a mere two structures, the conclusions that we can draw are strictly limited. However, this framework might very well provide a pattern to which other mythic structures can be added.

For similar reasons suggested by Levi-Strauss in "Four Winnebago Myths," I would now suggest that the Parable of the Sower and the story of the Woman with the Hemorrhage may be grouped together because, although one is a story told by Jesus, and the other is a story about him, they both contain the same fundamental opposition: subject-values are different, but the functions are the same, and the value rendered by subject-function combinations are surprisingly similar. The superimposition of the two structures might give us both more information regarding the content of each mytheme and about the myth represented by the two stories. A superimposition of the structures would appear as follows:

Fy(b) - Birds, Sun, Thorns
Woman

Fa-1(y) - Seed taken
Physicians

Fx(b) - Seed growing
Jesus

Fx(a) - Sower
Kingdom

In this structure, the alignment of the Sower and the Kingdom of God brings together culture giving and the holy giving. This

suggests that the listener might very well categorize the two and that the preacher is justified in juxtaposing the two. This juxtaposition becomes a perception mode of imagining the Kingdom, its nature, function and relation to the world. Not only can the Kingdom be understood as the holy giving in opposition to the unclean taking, but also as an act of giving by culture as well. Methodological caution should be exercised. I am not suggesting that this means that a culture, by giving, somehow has the power to bring about the Kingdom. Levi-Strauss' method purports to tell us how story will be understood by the listener. I am suggesting that the Kingdom and the Sower as mythemes be combined in order that the Sower give a greater imaginative clarity to the Kingdom of God. What is stressed here is that we are on the level of imagination intended to inform and direct behavior and the ordering of life together.

This structure likewise brings together the Woman with the Birds, Sun and Thorns. The results are provocative: the Birds, Sun and Thorns are the cosmic order taking, and the Woman is the unclean taking. This suggest that the Woman's action is not motivated by sinister conscious design. The level of her function is understood as primal, prompted by her condition and need to service. Her mythic opposition to the Kingdom therefore is not the result of intended violent opposition on the part of the Woman, but is a perception problem: Given the sacred order, what, if any, is the Woman's place in the sacred order? She exercises no motivated opposition to the Kingdom; her predicament is the result of a social order reflecting the community's self-understanding.

The superimposition of the Physicians with the seed-taken is interesting, because it suggests that like the seed, which is a kernel of life taken, the Physicians, who according to the standard convention could have been the Woman's kernel of life, restoring her health, are instead taken by the Woman's condition and thus use the opportunity for nefarious purpose, the exploitation of the Woman for financial gain. Where the seed-taken is perceived as the failure to make culture, the Physicians are perceived as this plus the preventing of the re-integration of a Woman into culture.

As the church is always interested in Christology, the juxtaposition of seed-growing with Jesus is of particular importance. The seed-growing represents a kernel of life reproducing. It combines the subject-value of the cosmic order with the function-value of the Sower. This is what integrates mythemes of the fundamental opposition, producing a harvest. Likewise, although subject to what is unclean, Jesus functions on the level of the Kingdom of God, and it is this which yields new life, the restoration and re-integration of the unclean into the community.

Having superimposed the two mythic structures, I might now suggest a division of the mythic structure which represents a model by which collective mythemes of the two stories might be perceived and grouped, and to which other stories of the same group might in future be added and understood:

Fy(b) - Birds, Sun, Thorns
 Woman

Fa-1(y) - Seed taken
 Physicians

The Unholy

- - - - -

Fx(b) - Seed growing
 Jesus

Mediator

- - - - -

Fx(a) - Sower
 Kingdom of God

The Holy

Should the future structuralist exegesis of texts show the same fundamental opposition or content, mythic structures could be added to this schema. Collective data would augment our understanding of the nature of the Holy, the Unholy and the Mediators set forth in texts, and the interrelations of the three. Of course, numerous analyses are required for the validation and modification of this hypothesis, but for the moment, it at least suggests that, as represented by this structure, to say Jesus is Christ is to say that although subject to the unholy, he functions on the level of the holy. And to be opposed to Jesus is to be so taken by the unholy that one functions in such a way as to prevent holiness.

Conclusion

This project began by asking the question of meaning. In story, how is meaning discovered, and how is it translated into community? Looking to Levi-Strauss for a method, we have discovered that he is suggesting a primal mode of perception that both orders the

contents in the composing of a story and at the same time orders the manner in which it will be understood. His method has been tested by applying it to two Bible stories, one told by Jesus, the other told about him. Thus far, we may conclude that Levi-Strauss' method works in that it helps us both to understand the story's meaning and how this meaning is translated into the community. The method for discovering the story's meaning as applied in Chapter 4 is Levi-Strauss'. I have tried to apply this method in his own terms. However, I must accept responsibility for the hermeneutical proposal spelled-out in this chapter. It is a modest proposal and has here been tested on a mere two texts. Careful and extensive research into Levi-Strauss' works coupled with the application of this technique on numerous texts from the Bible are clearly required if my own proposal is to be modified and substantiated.

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